

THE AWARD-WINNING INDEPENDENT: EDITOR OF THE YEAR, CORRESPONDENT OF THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,867

THURSDAY 11 MARCH 1999

(1R50p) 45p

INFANT SCHOOL RAGE

FOUR YEARS OLD AND OUT OF CONTROL IN THE 16-PAGE EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT



SONY: THIS TIME IT'S WAR

UK envoy expelled in 'spies' row

BY PAUL LASHMAR

A BRITISH diplomat was branded a spy and ordered out of Congo yesterday in an escalating dispute that has seen five Britons and a United States government official detained for espionage since last Sunday. The diplomat, believed to be Gregor Lusty, 30, was declared *persona non grata* and told to leave immediately after a day of denials and protests from London to the Congolese capital Kinshasa. Congo is in the middle of a civil war. Last week, a raiding party allied to President Laurent Kabila entered neighbouring Uganda and hacked to death eight Western tourists, including four Britons. Congo's Interior Minister, Gaetan Kakudji, yesterday accused the detained Britons of spying, and said: "A diplomat who was the guide in all of this, we have pronounced him *persona non grata*. He must leave the country today. I delivered the message to the British ambassador."

INSIDE

- Caught in Africa's great game page 13
- Britain's betrayal Review, page 5

The arrests have taken place against a backdrop of war, chaos and disintegration. The Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, is fast imploding, as rebels backed by at least three neighbouring countries fight to topple President Kabila. His grip on power is much weaker than his dictatorial predecessor, President Mobutu. Mr Kakudji, a member of President Kabila's inner circle, said yesterday: "The investigation has not yet been terminated... When they allow themselves to be found at military places and sites, and when one finds on them operational maps, in any country this would be espionage."

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We totally reject allegations that they were spies. They were in Kinshasa on legitimate business to carry out a review of arrangements for an evacuation of the embassy in the event of an emergency. This is a totally routine activity which is carried out at our embassies across the world."



The singer Annie Lennox, who was one of the celebrities who marked the 40th anniversary of China's invasion of Tibet at Westminster Central Hall in London last night. Andrew Burman

Inquiry into work of GM food scientist

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

A HIGH-POWERED team of scientists has been appointed to investigate the work of Dr Arpad Pusztai, whose findings triggered a furor over genetically modified (GM) food. The Royal Society, Britain's most eminent body of scientists, has asked six of the country's leading scientists to review the data that led Dr Pusztai to warn that people who eat GM food are "unwitting guinea pigs in a mass experiment". The six specialists were selected by the Royal Society for their expertise in different disciplines and their independence from the Pusztai affair. None has commented publicly on the controversy. It is almost unprecedented for the Royal Society to establish what is effectively an independent peer review of a scientist's unpublished work. It was brought about because of the intense publicity associated with the Pusztai affair. Last August, the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen suspended Dr Pusztai after he claimed in a television interview that rats fed GM potatoes had stunted growth and a defective immune system. The institute said Dr Pusztai had no evidence on which to base his assertions and claimed that he had become "muddled" over experiments that had not taken place. In February, 20 scientists, mostly friends of Dr Pusztai, signed a memorandum supporting him, citing new evidence. The members of the review team include experts in statistics, nutrition, animal genetics, epidemiology and pharmacology. They will report their findings next month.

Labour unease over tax cuts Prescott: 'Take a cab'

TONY BLAIR was accused of telling repeated "lies" last night after he clashed bitterly with William Hague over whether the overall tax burden would rise following this week's Budget. Downing Street appeared to contradict Mr Blair by conceding that taxes would increase over the lifetime of this Parliament, but insisted the rise would be less than under the spending plans Labour inherited from the Tories. Mr Blair won a boost when the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) revised its initial Budget analysis and said that, overall, all income groups would gain from it.

In the Commons, Mr Hague claimed the total tax increase in the next financial year would be £7.1bn, after decisions in previous Budgets were taken into account. The Tory leader told Mr Blair: "You don't want to admit it because when Labour said 'no tax increases at all' at the election, they lied to the people of Britain."

Mr Blair, basing his figures on this week's Budget only, said: "There isn't a tax increase. The tax is falling by £4.5bn net... Twenty million families in total better off."

But later Mr Blair's official spokesman conceded the Budget documents showed the share of national wealth taken by tax would rise from 36.6 per cent to 37 per cent during this Parliament. The Treasury explained that this was due to people entering the top rate tax bracket as their incomes rose, rather than the imposition of higher taxes.



JOHN PRESCOTT announced a novel scheme yesterday to help people in rural areas to use public transport - paying for taxis for them to get to bus stops. The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions revealed that £10m had been allocated in the Budget for the idea to be tried out. "I want to look at how, on the bus services in rural areas, you can begin to develop cars that could be on contract to take you to the bus point or the train point, rather than forcing bus

cars and buses working effectively to meet people's needs. "You could get a contract with someone in the village who might be a taxi driver, so that if a passenger was going for the 11.45am bus you could pick them up and make arrangements to pick them up when they come back, and it's all in the one fare. We are looking at how we might do it."

Mr Prescott said the Government was responding to protests from rural communities - many of which have seen bus services cut since privatisation.

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Teachers accused over race Racist school system blamed for ethnic minorities' results Home P3

£5m for Goldof Sale of 'Big Breakfast' TV firm to Carlton raises £15 for Bob Geldof and friends Home P5

Dole aims for president Republican Elizabeth Dole starts race for White House Foreign P12

Serbs on the rampage Serb forces rampaged through Kosovo villages as peace talks continued Foreign P14

Arab becomes Miss Israel For the first time an Arab was crowned Miss Israel Foreign P15

Internet services stay free Ofcom relieves free Internet services despite a plea from British Telecom Business P16

Race-fixing charges Five men were charged in horse race-fixing inquiry Sport P28

INSIDE THE REVIEW

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Arts	6.00	AS	12.00	SA
Books	50.00	SA	5.00	L
Business	10.00	SA	10.00	L
Classics	3.00	CS	8.00	L
Cinema	1.20	CC	8.00	L
Crosswords	1.10	C	20.00	SA
Education	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Environment	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Health	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
History	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Home	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Law	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Life	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Politics	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Science	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Sport	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Travel	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
TV	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
Weather	10.00	SA	20.00	SA
World	10.00	SA	20.00	SA

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Impossible dreamer, impossible man: My year with Stanley Kubrick

SARA MAITLAND ON WORKING WITH THE LATE, GREAT FILM DIRECTOR

THE BEST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, HAMISH McRAE, IAN JACK, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, SU SANNAH FRANKILL, BRIAN VINI, PHILIP HENSHER, JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, DEBORAH ORR, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MIKE KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH

■ **MARK STEELE:**
THERE ARE MORE
'ANY QUESTIONS'
THAN ANSWERS
■ **PLUS MUSIC**
& SCIENCE

NHS fear as claims figures rise 700%

NHS HOSPITALS have recorded a 700 per cent increase in just one year in the cost of incidents which could lead to a claim of medical negligence.

The rise, highlighted in a survey which covered hospitals in Wales, has taken the total payouts for clinical negligence at March 1998 to £145m, almost twice the previous year's figure.

The National Audit Office, the spending watchdog which carried out the study, said that the money will have to be found from spending on patient care.

Last October, a Welsh health authority, Dyfed Powys, paid £32m to an 11-year-old boy, Sam Mansell, who was brain damaged at birth in what was then the largest medical negligence pay out in British legal history. It has since been exceeded twice and there are further cases in the pipeline expected to end in similar pay outs, causing alarm across the NHS.

The escalating cost of the claims has left Welsh health authorities facing debts of almost £25m at the end of last year which will amount to almost £50m by the end of this month.

Five NHS trusts had deficits of over £1m each at the end of last year. David Davis, chairman of the Commons Public Accounts Committee: "The latest figures represent a substantial deterioration from a year ago and the position was far from good then. A major reason for the worsening performance is the doubling to £145m of the cost of clinical negligence cases and it alarms me that there are still weaknesses in the way clinical failures are reported."

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

The Audit office report says that most of the rise in the total forecast cost of £145m is accounted for by a leap in the estimated cost of "contingent liabilities" from £7.5m in 1996-97 to £63m in 1997-98, an increase of 737 per cent.

Contingent liabilities are those where an accident has occurred but it is not yet clear whether it will lead to payment of compensation.

The Welsh Office said that the increase was due to "improvements in the processing of cases leading to their earlier identification." Although this accounts for most of the increase there is also a nationwide trend to increasing litigation in medicine which has been apparent for more than a decade.

Sir John Bourn, the auditor general says in the report that significant progress is being made in the effective management of risk within NHS trusts but concludes that further improvements are still needed in the reporting of incidents.

Mr Davis said the NHS in Wales had tried to minimise the financial impact of the negligence claims on patient care by taking out short-term loans and delaying payments to suppliers. A spokesman for the Welsh Office said yesterday: "It is a pretty hefty increase [in negligence payments] but it will have to come out of health authority's resources."

The NAO said it was now carrying out a similar study into English hospitals.



Ceremonial 'Bedu' masks from the Ivory Coast which went on display at the Horniman Museum in south London yesterday in Britain's first permanent gallery dedicated to African-related cultures. Peter Macdiarmid

Tories told to pay back £500,000 loan

THE TORIES have until the end of this year to repay a £500,000 interest-free loan from a millionaire businessman, it emerged last night.

The loan from Jim Moffat, the founder of the AT Mays travel agent chain who died last year, helped to bankroll the party's general election campaign in 1997.

The party treasurers, chaired by the multi-millionaire Michael Ashcroft, will almost certainly have to dip into their own pockets to pay back the money.

They have been helping to bankroll the party's activities since the general election as recruitment has faltered and constituents have displayed a reluctance to pay their dues.

The Conservatives' last accounts showed a £3.8m deficit in March 1998, and the party had to pay £11m in loans, taxes and other liabilities during the next year. The party raised a total of £8m in "free" loans before the election, the accounts show, but much of the money was converted into donations afterwards.

The news that a substantial part of the 1997 campaign was funded by Mr Moffat would have been kept secret had it not been mentioned in his £7m will.

Yesterday his son, Jamie Moffat, said that his father had supported many causes.

"He was asked to help so he agreed to help. He helped in a number of different organisations, and it wasn't as if he had

BY FRANK ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

any particular allegiance to any of them.

"If he felt it was right, he would do it," he said.

Mr Moffat added that there had been no interest payments attached to the loan, and that it was due to be redeemed in one instalment before the end of 1999.

Mr Moffat founded the AT Mays chain in Saltcoats, Scotland in the Sixties and built it into one of the UK's biggest travel agents, with 300 branches. He retired in 1990.

The Labour Party said last night that the revelation unveiled a wider pattern of interest-free loans given to the Conservatives and later turned into donations.

Under Lord Neill's proposals on political funding, all political loans would have to be declared by the parties, as would donations.

The Conservatives now declare donations over £5,000 but have only done so since the 1997 general election.

A Labour spokesman said the Conservatives had been guilty of "underhand" fundraising methods.

"For years the Tories have used loans as a way of disguising donations. Now they are going to pay the price for such shenanigans," he said.

Conservative Central Office could not contact the relevant officials for comment last night.

Scientists find flaw in age test for ancient races

PEOPLE WHO lived centuries ago may have had much longer lives than is commonly supposed, due to a potentially devastating flaw in archaeologists' standard methods.

Measures used by scientists such as the wear on bones and teeth, and the development of skeletal characteristics, do not match closely enough to our actual age to offer precise data about age - and can often underestimate it, according to new research led by Mark Pollard, professor of archaeology at the University of Bradford.

His team's work, with the University of Leeds, suggested that age studies of bones from people who lived around the 11th century could have been up to 30 years too low - contradicting the assumption that hardly anybody then survived beyond the age of 55. Instead, they might have survived into old age. The work, reported in today's *New Scientist*, would overturn years of work by archaeologists, including both the methods of data-gathering, the data itself and any conclusions about such peoples' lifestyles based on that data.

"We think we have shown problems in the way that age estimates are obtained," said Professor Pollard. "But we are not convinced that we have the solution to that yet. Still, that is a step forward."

The team's criticism of standard methods rests on the statistical technique used to estimate the biological ages of bones. Called "regression", it groups large samples of bones of known ages and produces a plot which best fits the scattered points.

But, said Professor Pollard, people can differ enough that such measures become inaccurate. "Individuals don't respond to ageing in the same way, what we really need are skeletal ageing data that are better matched to peoples' ages." The present systems, such as the length of bones, and the degree of wear at joints and in teeth, is too imprecise to stand rigorous statistical examination.

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

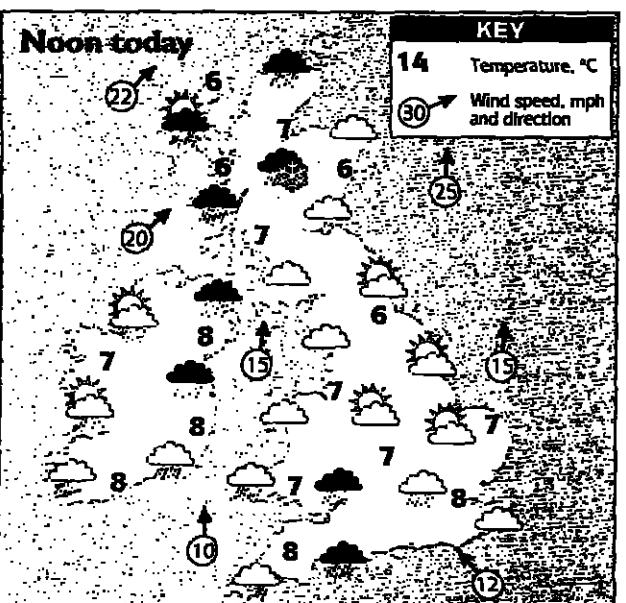
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BRITAIN TODAY



FORECAST

General situation: Much of England and Wales will start cold and frosty. Cloud will build in the south-west bringing rain to south Wales and southern England, before spreading northwards this afternoon. However, it will turn milder as it does so. Another band of rain will spread across Scotland and Northern Ireland but any snow will be mainly confined to the peaks. As the rain clears it will brighten up in the far north-west but there will still be some blustery showers.

London, SE England, E Angles, Midlands: Starting sunny but frosty. Cloud increasing bringing rain late. A light south-easterly wind. Max temp 1-10C (45-50F).

West & SW Scotland, SW England, S Wales: Rain spreading northwards and eastwards but brightening in the far west by the afternoon. A light and variable wind. Max temp 6-9C (43-48F).

SE Wales, C & NE England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Frosty but sunny at first. Cloud will increase as rain edges in this afternoon, perhaps with some sleet or snow on hills for a time. A light southerly wind. Max temp 5-8C (41-46F).

E & NE England: Cold and frosty but mostly sunny this morning. It will become cloudier and some rain is expected in southern fringes. Elsewhere should stay dry. A light to moderate southerly wind. Max temp 5-7C (41-45F).

SE & SW Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Wales: A dry, bright but cold start. The south will stay dry until the afternoon but the north will soon have rain. A fresh to strong south-easterly wind. Max temp 5-7C (41-45F).

West & SW Scotland, Glasgow, N Wales: A dry, bright but cold start. The south will stay dry until the afternoon but the north will soon have rain. A fresh to strong south-easterly wind. Max temp 5-7C (41-45F).

N Ireland: Rain this morning mostly giving way to sunshine and showers this afternoon. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 7-9C (45-48F).

OUTLOOK

Overnight mist and fog will clear to leave Friday mild with sunny spells. Showers will affect the north and west, turning wintry over the hills. On Saturday, the south will remain mild with sunshine but showers will continue across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

TRAVEL

London: A12 Great Ouse Roundabout, Leytonstone. Major roadworks on new M11 link road. Until 31st December. Bristol: M5, J10-11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Cardiff: M4, J10-11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Derbyshire: A6 Between Derby Southern Bypass (A50) and Shardlow Road roundabout. East of Alveston, Corlford for work on new A50. Until 13th October. AA Roadworks: Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Warmest: Paisley 9C (48F)
Coldest (day): Lynham 5C (41F)
Wettest: Nottingham 19.0 mm
Sunniest: Douglas 8.5 hrs
For 24hrs to 2pm Wednesday

HIGH TIDES

Location	AM	PM	HT
Ayr	11.33	3.4	9.4
Belfast	11.36	4.3	-
Bristol	4.36	5.1	5.21
Cardiff	5.58	3.2	6.54
Cardiff	11.07	4.1	11.46
Greenwich	5.52	2.6	6.05
Haverth	5.10	3.0	5.42
Holyhead	4.12	4.3	4.57
Hull (Albert Dock)	-	-	12.01
Leeds	4.51	7.1	5.30
Liverpool	5.03	3.0	6.06
London	11.01	5.0	11.55
Manchester	11.41	1.2	-
Portsmouth	1.36	3.8	2.09
Scarborough	10.16	4.3	10.57
Wick	5.08	2.7	5.57

AIR QUALITY

Location	NO ₂	SO ₂	Good
London	Good	Good	Good
SE England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
C & NE England	Good	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 06.25
Sun sets: 17.58
Moon rises: 02.25
Moon sets: 11.11
New Moon: March

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecast dial 0800 5000 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

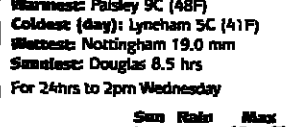
RAIN OR SHINE...

SEVERAL DAYS of warm weather in Ukraine this week have killed four people after the thaw weakened winter ice, officials said yesterday.

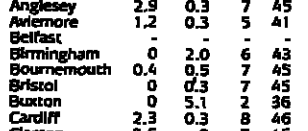
On Sunday, two villagers died when their tractor fell through the ice as they drove across a frozen water reservoir in the central Vinnytsia region. And on Monday two children fell through thin ice and drowned in a lake in the capital Kiev.

THE WORLD

EUROPE NOON TODAY



THE ATLANTIC NOON TODAY



THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Closest: 1024.0
Farthest: 1024.0
Lowest: 1024.0
Highest: 1024.0
Lowest: 1024.0
Highest: 1024.0

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Adelaide	26.79	13.00	100
Algeria	26.79	13.00	100
Amman	19.96	13.00	100
Ankara	19.96	13.00	100
Antananarivo	19.96	13.00	100
Athens	19.96	13.00	100
Bahia	19.96	13.00	100
Bangkok	19.96	13.00	100
Batavia	19.96	13.00	100
Bombay	19.96	13.00	100
Buenos Aires	19.96	13.00	100
Calcutta	19.96	13.00	100
Canton	19.96	13.00	100
Cebu	19.96	13.00	100
Colon	19.96	13.00	100
Hankow	19.96	13.00	100
Hong Kong	19.96	13.00	100
Kobe	19.96	13.00	100
London	19.96	13.00	100
Lyons	19.96	13.00	100
Manila	19.96	13.00	100
Medan	19.96	13.00	100
Meerut	19.96	13.00	100
Moscow	19.96	13.00	100
Odessa	19.96	13.00	100
Peking	19.96	13.00	100
Rangoon	19.96	13.00	100
San Francisco	19.96	13.00	100
Singapore	19.96	13.00	100
Sourabaya	19.96	13.00	100
Tientsin	19.96	13.00	100
Yokohama	19.96	13.00	100

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Adelaide	26.79	13.00	100
Algeria	26.79	13.00	100
Amman	19.96	13.00	100
Ankara	19.96	13.00	100
Antananarivo	19.96	13.00	100
Athens	19.96	13.00	100
Bahia	19.96	13.00	100
Bangkok	19.96	13.00	100
Batavia	19.96	13.00	100
Bombay	19.96	13.00	100
Buenos Aires	19.96	13.00	100
Calcutta	19.96	13.00	100
Canton	19.96	13.00	100
Cebu	19.96	13.00	100
Colon	19.96	13.00	100
Hankow	19.96	13.00	100
Hong Kong	19.96	13.00	100
Kobe	19.96	13.00	100
London	19.96	13.00	100
Lyons	19.96	13.00	100
Manila	19.96	13.00	100
Medan	19.96	13.00	100
Meerut	19.96	13.00	100
Moscow	19.96	13.00	100
Odessa	19.96	13.00	100
Peking	19.96	13.00	100
Rangoon	19.96	13.00	100
San Francisco	19.96	13.00	100
Singapore	19.96	13.00	100
Sourabaya	19.96	13.00	100
Tientsin	19.96	13.00	100
Yokohama	19.96	13.00	100

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**BY KIM SENGUPTA
AND LINUS GREGORIADIS**

private business have been attempting, with some degree of success, to bring in more jobs, the view is that the steps are in the right direction.

At the bright and airy building of the Enterprise Centre, where local government and

Adrian Hardy, the head of economic development at the centre and **Peter Morton**, the business services director for Business Link between Wigan borough and commerce, reel off figures for jobs created and local businesses making good.

The unemployment rate, more than 10 per cent 15 years ago, is now just over 5 per cent and the population has grown by 10,000 in the past three decades to just under 310,000. "The devil is in the detail," said Mr Hardy, "but overall we like the breaks being given for investment." Mr Morton

agrees: "Of course, one can always say we would have liked more, but I agree with the basic approach."

A few minutes' walk from the glass and steel of the Enterprise Centre stands The Indestructible Ventilating Fan, built by Walker Brothers for Sutton Manor Colliery and state of the art at the time - 1910

"That was a real piece of engineering," said Joe Wilson, a retired colliery man now in his

eighties, out walking with his 74-year-old wife, Jean. "It still looks good, doesn't it? But that's all finished now."

What did they think of the Budget? Mrs Wilson said resolutely: "There's nowt in it for us. I've been a Labour supporter all my life but this new lot don't know much about the working classes, do they? I mean, what does your Tony Blair know about the working classes?" John Widdard, who employs

30 people at William Santus, famous for their Uncle Joe's Mint Balls, said he was sceptical about whether the Budget would have a significant impact on his company. "They are giving with one hand and taking away with the other," he said.

David Page is the managing director of Patak's, an Indian food manufacturer with a turnover of £45m. Mr Page said: "Things are progressing in Wigan, there is a desire

among both the borough and business to make this place a success. The Budget, like New Labour, is very well packaged but frankly I don't see any real action to help small or medium-sized businesses."

Susan Dean, 41, has two children and a husband who is unemployed. "Gordon Brown could have done a lot more," she said. "He keeps going on about how well the economy is doing, but ordinary people

aren't really seeing much of that. The north has been badly neglected. I'm not blaming this Government for that, it was Thatcher who did the worst damage, but we expect them to try and make up for that.

George Orwell appears to be a uniting factor among many in Wigan. Peter Morton feels

Orwell's portrait of the town "is simply unfair" and unnecessary baggage to have to carry.

The tourist information centre's *Discover Wigan Borough* leaflet stresses: "The new and revitalised Wigan is a far cry from the cloth cap image portrayed by Orwell on his infamous Road to Wigan Pier." Mrs Dean's analysis is even simpler: "George Orwell wasn't a northerner at all, he was from the south."

Mr Hagu In't exist

[illegible]

'Anti-smuggling tsar' to take on cigarette cheats

A CAMPAIGN to stop smugglers bringing in millions of pounds worth of cigarettes and tobacco is to be launched by the Government.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, said yesterday that smugglers were costing the UK £1.5bn in lost tax. The huge scale of the illegal operations from the European

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Union, where prices are roughly half the UK level, has been blamed for flooding the market with cheap cigarettes and causing a rise in the number of smokers for the first time in years.

Mr Brown, speaking the day

after he added 17.5p to a packet of 20 cigarettes, said he would not allow organised criminals to undermine measures intended to protect people's health. The Chancellor acknowledged that smuggling had risen sharply as the level of duty had gone up. The Government intends to recruit a high-profile figure - an anti-

smuggling "tsar" – to head the new initiative.

Among the ideas the official will consider is for every packet of cigarettes to be stamped with its country of origin, which would allow Customs and Excise to identify and seize illegal imports and to prosecute those selling them. Tighter security at ports and

tougher sentences could also be examined.

Mr Brown said that only a few years ago about 3 per cent of tobacco in Britain had been smuggled. That figure had risen to about 10 per cent and was still increasing. "We are talking about organised crime. The loss of £1.5bn in revenues is not something we are

prepared to accept," he said.
So successful is the black

So successful is the black market that officials fear that, in the next three years, up to one in five cigarettes in the UK will be smuggled. Criminal networks see tobacco smuggling as a safer, but highly profitable alternative to drug-smuggling. Smugglers can pay £1.60 for a 50g pack of tobacco that costs

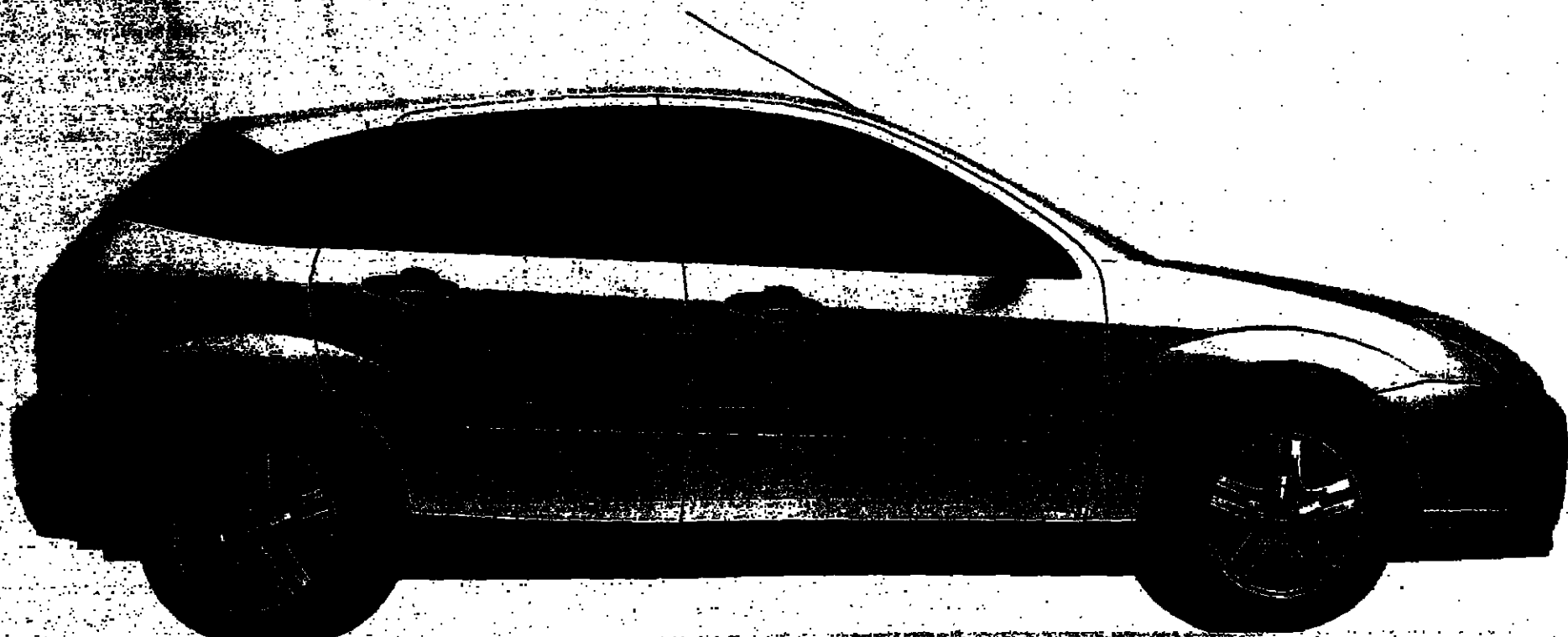
£7.45 in Britain. Hawkers in markets and pubs sell duty-free cigarettes at £2.50 a packet. At pre-Budget costs, £2.90 of the price of legitimately sold cigarettes goes to the Treasury.

At the centre of the smuggling operation is the tiny tax-free European principality of Andorra. In 1997, it imported 3.1bn cigarettes - equal to

every resident smoking seven packs a day. Gangs set up front companies there to buy cigarettes from British manufacturers. The tobacco, exempt from duty, is smuggled back. British gangs make frequent trips to France and Belgium, where warehouses can legally sell tobacco for a quarter of the UK price.

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A good bedside manner helps the medicine go down

AS SOMEONE who always looks the other way when being given an injection I rather like the idea of taxation by stealth. Gordon Brown's circumspection about the more painful aspects of his Budget strikes me not so much as sly evasion, more as a tactful bedside manner.

Don't tell me when you're going to jab it in, or how big the needle is, just get on with it. Before the muscles can tense in dread the operation may well be over. Much better than the dull ache I get when I'm obliged to look at my pay slip without the anaesthetic of ignorance. Then again, I've always taken a rather fatalistic attitude to taxation,

a fatalism reinforced by the vague feeling that even if it hurts it's somehow doing me good.

I imagine this puts me in a minority - Mr Hague must think so because he has decided to attack the Chancellor head-on as a sneak thief. On Tuesday he described him as the kind of man who offers to buy you a drink and then borrows a fiver off you to do it. Yesterday he spoke more bluntly about the Pickpocket Chancellor.

Mr Blair is naturally obliged to contradict this depiction of his colleague as a robbing hood and came armed with statistics to do it. Nothing complicated, you un-

derstand. As Mr Hague pointed out Mr Blair would rather not stray into the denser thickets of the Red Book, from whose fiscal entanglements a successful ambush might be launched. Instead he had a single figure to fire back against every Tory with a tabled question.

Laurence Robertson was the first to take incoming, despite the fact that his question bore no relation to the Budget at all. A minor detail like that wasn't going to deprive Mr Blair of an early opportunity to crow: 11,000 families were now better off in Mr Robertson's constituency as a result of the Budget, he announced triumphantly. Con-

THE SKETCH



THOMAS
SUTCLIFFE

servative members slumped a little as they realised that this rather dubious statistic was the only thing on the menu for the day.

William Hague was after a different figure - and had chosen his words carefully to try and flush it out from cover. What was the total tax increase for the coming year as a result of the Government's budgets to date? He stressed the plural and asked for the answer "in pounds", which sounded rather schoolmastery of him.

He probably would have liked Mr Blair to show his workings too, but the Prime Minister wasn't even going to tackle this particular sum, responding with the incredulity of a pupil who has just been asked to calculate how long it would take five men to dig a trench thirty feet in

length, when everybody knows you would hire a sub-contractor with a mechanical digger for such a job.

Taxes had gone down, he said, shaking his head that Mr Hague should be so hopelessly out of touch. For a while backbenchers booed at each other like the audience for *Play Your Cards Right* - "Higher, higher!" shouted the Tories, "Lower, lower!" Labour yelled back.

"Let's cut the waffle and answer the question," said Mr Hague, but Mr Blair was enjoying his waffle too much to countenance any such thing, served as it was with a syrup of institutional approval (he later read out the highlights of the In-

ternational Monetary Fund's glowing end-of-term report) and a thick side order of ham.

He was enjoying it so much that he almost forgot his most important obligation on these occasions. Mr Ashdown came to his rescue, looking up at the clock as the Prime Minister belted out a prophecy of ever-increasing prosperity and realising that we were dangerously close to the end of Prime Minister's Questions. When Mr Blair paused for breath, he seized his chance. "What, no boom and bust?" he shouted. Mr Blair, seconds away from a ghastly breach of precedent, gratefully repeated the phrase and departed.

Lawrence case lessons 'are being ignored'

SIR PAUL Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was accused yesterday of ignoring the lessons of the Stephen Lawrence case after he criticised two of the key recommendations in the inquiry report and expressed disquiet about a third.

Dr Richard Stone, one of the four-strong Macpherson inquiry team, said there had been "quite a lot of hostility" to the team's findings and insisted that if any of the report's proposals was thrown out the whole inquiry would be undermined. Anti-racist campaigners also expressed dismay that the Commissioner had questioned the importance of extending the Race Relations Act.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, however, has already expressed doubt privately as to whether all of the inquiry's 70 recommendations are desirable or practical. The refusal to implement them could lead to a big dispute with the supporters of the Lawrence campaign and the inquiry team.

Earlier yesterday Sir Paul, whose force was severely criticised for the disastrous murder investigation into the

LAWRENCE INQUIRY

BY JASON BENNETTO
AND IAN BURRELL

stabbing of the black teenager, caused controversy after he told MPs of the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee that he could see no way of implementing Sir William's call to make it a crime to express racist behaviour or language in a private place. He argued that it would be very hard to reconcile with the right to free speech guaranteed in the European Convention of Human Rights. He said: "It will be explored and probably rejected as impractical."

He also warned he was uneasy over proposals to drop the double jeopardy principle, whereby a person cannot be tried twice for the same crime. "I haven't yet found a way through this that I'm comfortable with," he told the committee. Ministers are known to share Sir Paul's concerns.

He went on to say that the arguments for bringing the police within the scope of the Race Relations Act were not clear-cut and although the move would increase police accountability,

fears have been expressed that officers could be more reluctant to arrest people from ethnic minorities, fearing legal action.

The Government, however, has already said it intends to bring the police within the scope of the Act.

The National Assembly Against Racism said the Lawrence affair had underlined the need for extending the Act and it was disappointing that Sir Paul was "not prepared to learn the lessons".

Dr Richard Stone defended proposals to change the law to enable defendants to be tried twice for the same crime. He said: "Maybe the Court of Appeal could later have the power to open a case once only."

It was also disclosed yesterday that the Met are starting to use undercover black police officers - some from outside forces - to investigate fellow officers suspected of being racist.

About 500 police cars in the Metropolitan area are being fitted with aircraft-style "black boxes" to help to reduce accidents. The devices will record the vehicle's speed to build up a picture of its movements in the lead-up to an accident.



Lord Mason of Barnsley enjoys a smoke on National No Smoking Day yesterday, during the Lords and Commons Pipe and Cigar Smokers' Club luncheon at the Houses of Parliament

Michael Crabtree/PA

Cook's absence causes regret

SELECT COMMITTEES

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

ROBIN COOK came under fire yesterday for failing to appear before a House of Commons select committee, fuelling claims of government arrogance towards Parliament.

The criticism of the Foreign Secretary by the Select Committee on Defence will be added to a list of complaints being gathered by the chairmen of the select committees to present to the Government. Committee chairmen are seeking more powers to guarantee their independence from interference or pressure.

The Defence Select Committee said "we particularly regret" the failure of Mr Cook to give evidence for its report on the Strategic Defence Review, which was supposed to be "foreign policy led".

The defence committee was warned yesterday that 3,000 jobs could be lost unless the Government gave the arms supply industry more support. Jack Dromey, national secretary of the TGWU, said: "The sad truth is that the British government does not back our ordinance factories in the same way as do the governments of competitors."

Maude failed to declare interests on motion form

THE SHADOW Chancellor, Francis Maude, was criticised yesterday for failing to declare two directorships during Commons proceedings.

The Standards and Privileges Committee found that although Mr Maude had listed his interests in the official register, he should have mentioned them again when he signed a motion or amendment.

Complaints against Mr Maude concerned his directorships of the supermarket chain Asda and of Gartmore Shared Equity Trust (GSET).

The shadow chancellor failed to put the required "R" by

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

his name to denote a registered interest when signing a motion on PEPs and ISAs and when promoting a new Finance Bill clause on the retail trade.

Mr Maude accepted he should have declared his Asda directorship but said his name had been routinely attached to the clause as a member of the Conservative front bench.

He also argued that GSET did not trade in PEPs or ISAs, but the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Elizabeth Filkin, found that a closely related firm, Gartmore Investment, did do so.



Francis Maude: Censured by standards watchdog

abeth Filkin, found that a closely related firm, Gartmore Investment, did do so.

She accepted that Mr Maude's transgression had been unintentional, but added it was members' responsibility to ensure they complied with the rules. The Standards and Privileges Committee decided no further action should be taken against Mr Maude.

The complaints were brought by two Labour MPs, Christopher Leslie and Gerald Davies. Last night Mr Leslie said that ignorance was no defence. "The question is, how many other things go on without his knowledge? I personally think he should come and apologise," he said.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Blair's pledge

DUTY-FREE sales will top the agenda at a meeting of European leaders later this month. The Prime Minister told MPs that plans to replace the system were "simply not good enough".

No power cuts

MOST ELECTRICITY suppliers are confident there will be no disruption from the Millennium Bug. Lord McIntosh of Haringey, for the Government, said.

Fear to tread

LORD GRAY of Contin, a former Tory minister, warned that "hordes of ramblers, climbing hills", could scare away eagles and other rare birds in the Scottish glens.

Housing move

COUNCILS ARE to be given a single capital allocation for housing, the Home Office minister Hilary Armstrong said.

MPs fight curbs on vitamin sales

LABOUR BACKBENCHERS warned the Government yesterday not to impose regulations on producers of vitamins, minerals and dietary supplements unless the products proved to be unsafe.

Mark Todd, the MP for Derbyshire South, stressed during a short debate that consumers should be left to make their own choices.

It was not the role of government to prevent people from taking products that were considered safe. Companies producing the supplements were at risk of going under if strict rules were introduced.

Mr Todd, a member of the Agriculture Select Committee, described as a "fiasco" recent proposals to regulate vitamin B6 despite the fact that no one taking it "had complained of ill effects. I do believe the consumer should be left to make their own judgements on these matters. It simply shouldn't be the Government's business to prevent someone taking a product not known to be unsafe, if they feel it does them good."

"Let us establish a clear framework for how to regulate these products. If further regulation is needed, then we

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

BY SARAH SCHAEFER

should consult the public on their perceptions - and then act.

"Without this, I believe we risk incoherent action, damaging to businesses and totally inexplicable to many consumers."

But Tessa Jowell, the minister for Public Health, insisted the Government's plans for the licensing of medicines would not affect dietary supplements. "Claims that if the consultation proposals became law the Medicine Control Agency would sweep supplements and herbal remedies from the shelves unless they were licensed are completely unfounded," she said.

The Government's proposals would make the classification of medicines "more transparent, consistent and credible", she said. In addition, there would be a statutory right for manufacturers to enter the licensing process.

However, Brian Iddon, the Labour MP for Bolton South East, said dietary supplements fell into a "regulatory no man's land. Attempts to use either medicines law or foodstuffs law to regulate them will, and has, caused problems," he said.

THE HOUSE



Rules change

MINISTERS ARE considering changing the rules on the destruction of DNA samples collected during homicide investigations amid concern by the parents of murder victim Louise Smith that it would waste police and public time to destroy them. Some 4,500 samples were collected during the inquiry into her death.

Parties register

BREAKAWAY Conservative and Labour parties have been officially registered to fight forthcoming elections. They include MEPs Hugh Kerr and Ken Coates, expelled from Labour after protesting at the party's plan for picking Euro-candidates. A pro-Euro Conservative Party founded by MEPs John Stevens and Brendan Donnelly will also compete.

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A spot check by *The Independent* at the museum was

John Voss

Mr Smales said he was perfectly happy to have his creation labelled a green theme park but stressed there was more to it. "We've gone beyond environmentalism," he said. "This is not just about landscape remediation and wildlife. It's about people and jobs and where the industries of the future are going to come from."

Fee to see: The British Museum's Chinese scroll

[illegible]

Mrs Dole in race for the White House

THE ELIZABETH Dole road-show came to snow-shrouded Iowa yesterday, where the aspiring presidential candidate took over the convention centre in the state capital, Des Moines, to launch her bid for the White House.

In her first public set-piece event since mooting a run for the presidency, Mrs Dole, 62, was due to announce she was forming an "exploratory committee" to gauge her chances of competing credibly for the Republican nomination next year. In Iowa yesterday, though, there seemed no doubt that Mrs Dole was intent on running.

Even though she has still not formally registered her candidacy, her studiously sparkling and hopeful demeanour testified to her presidential ambitions. She is also starting in a series of campaign advertisements, which were due to be aired in Iowa and New Hampshire from yesterday evening.

Regarded as the start of the contest proper, the Iowa caucuses - meetings to determine the state party's nominee for president - are fixed for 9 February 2000. The New Hampshire primary follows soon after. Either can make or break a would-be president.

While closely watched, Mrs

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Des Moines, Iowa

Dole's trip to Iowa was not quite the triumphal progress she might have hoped for. Apart from complications caused by a blizzard that disrupted air travel from Washington, her hastily arranged visit gave the impression of a catch-up exercise designed to recover ground lost to the early favourite for the Republican nomination, George W Bush.

Mrs Dole was greeted by the results of a poll showing Iowa Republicans entitled to vote in next year's caucuses already preferred Mr Bush by a large margin - even though she has made several recent trips to Iowa and Mr Bush has yet to visit the state. The poll, which mirrored national polls, showed Mr Bush taking 36.7 per cent of the vote compared with Mrs Dole's 16.4 per cent.

The *Des Moines Register* described the results - perhaps rather kindly - as "mixed".

When Mrs Dole visited New Hampshire a month ago for private meetings with potential backers and a speech to the Chamber of Commerce, she was ahead in that state. Since then, Mr Bush's campaign - also still not formally regis-

tered - has gathered momentum, while Mrs Dole's has seemed to stagnate. Her appearance in Des Moines yesterday was an attempt to give it a new push.

Polls increasingly suggest voters are amenable to the idea of a female president. And Mrs Dole, by virtue of holding two cabinet jobs in previous Republican administrations, campaigning for her husband Bob's presidential run in 1996 and her position - until she resigned in January - as head of the American Red Cross, is well qualified.

She has not, however, stood for office since being elected class president at school and her ability to ad lib - vital to a successful campaign - is questioned. "She's a very rehearsed person," an Iowa Republican said yesterday, "she'll have to learn to go with the flow."

Given the strength of Mr Bush's candidacy, there are signs that Mrs Dole may rely on her uniqueness as a woman candidate more than she might have done. In her television commercials, she alludes to the shame brought on the Clinton White House by the Lewinsky affair, implying that that sort of thing would be out of the question with a conservative woman in the Oval Office.



Elizabeth Dole, who is in the race to take up the Republicans' presidential baton from her husband, Bob AP

Prince's visit triggers protest

BY MARCUS TANNER

HUNDREDS OF Argentine demonstrators chanted slogans against the Prince of Wales and burnt Union flags as he made a speech calling for the Falkland Islanders to be left to live in peace.

Police in riot gear fired tear gas and called in water cannon when protesters threw a petrol bomb at a road-block near the Alvear Palace Hotel in Buenos Aires, where the Prince was delivering his address to an audience that included the country's President, Carlos Menem. Two police officers were injured and 27 people were arrested.

Prince Charles told his audience that while the British royal family enjoyed the limited constitutional right to warn, encourage and be consulted, they did have the right to express their hopes for the future. "My hope is that the people of modern, democratic Argentina... will in the future be able to live amicably alongside the people of another modern, if rather smaller, democracy lying a few hundred miles off your coast," he said.

The speech was as close as Prince Charles could go without becoming directly embroiled in the struggle over sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, which Argentina invaded in 1982. Although his message went down well with the hotel audience, the Prince's presence has infuriated hard-line nationalists, who accuse President Menem of conceding too much to Britain over the islands. Mr Menem upholds Argentina's claim to the islands but has shunned the issue to the bottom of his agenda.

Earlier, in a gesture calculated to soothe national pride over the 1982 war with Britain, the Prince laid a wreath at a memorial to the 750 Argentine soldiers killed in the conflict. The tribute echoed President Menem's gesture in London four months ago, when he paid homage to Britain's 372 war dead. Prince Charles' gesture upset some Falkland Islanders, whom he is due to meet after visiting Uruguay today.

US launches crackdown on shoddy airlines

AS ANYONE who does it will tell you, flying internally in the United States these days is rarely a pleasant experience. Glamour? Forget it. Think Greyhound - and peanuts (or worse, pretzels) and bruised knees. Passengers, however, are getting fed up and politicians are beginning to notice. All of a sudden, Washington is thick with proposals aimed at expanding passengers' rights.

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

Hearings began on Capitol Hill yesterday on two separate bills on the subject, while Al Gore, the Vice-President, unveiled ideas of his own at the White House. Taken together, the various measures would be designed to send a single message to the airlines - give us a little more respect.

Mr Gore, whose eyes are now on the 2000 presidential race, wants to see a doubling of the financial compensation passengers should be paid when they find themselves "bumped" from a flight when they have reserved seats and checked in on time. He is similarly asking for a 100 per cent increase in the money airlines should pay out when they lose luggage. Common to all the proposals

are requirements for more honesty from the airlines, both about the exact journeys passengers will be taking - owing up, for example, when a code-share flight is being operated by another carrier not named on the ticket - and about what is going on when problems arise. It is a "carrot and stick approach", a White House official said, "making information accessible to the travelling public

as well as providing for compensation for unfair treatment".

The hostility towards the carriers has been brewing for a long time. Last year, complaints registered with the government rose 25 per cent from 1997. Two incidents this winter, however, helped to unleash public anger.

One was a strike by American Airlines pilots during a holiday week last month. The

other involved mistakes made by Northwest Airlines on a snowy day in January when dozens of jets landed at a blizzard-bound Detroit airport only to get stuck in a taxi-way jam. Some passengers were trapped in their planes for up to seven hours with no food or drink and overflowing toilets.

Several hundred have now joined in a class-action lawsuit against the carrier. Defenders of the airlines point out that it was deregulation 21 years ago that put profit above service in the industry. Since 1978, the numbers of passengers in US skies has doubled. Moreover, whatever else, the industry has a good safety record: last year there was not a single death among passengers flying domestically in the US on commercial carriers.

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Britons snared in Africa's Great Game

THE FOUR Britons and one American detained by agents of President Laurent Kabila on Sunday claim they were gathering information needed in the event of a possible evacuation of British citizens from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Congolese authorities claim they were gathering intelligence that could be used by the enemies of the Kinshasa regime. They put its five suspected spies under house arrest in their hotel and then yesterday expelled the diplomat they said was "guiding" them.

Whoever is telling the truth - the British Government, or an old Marxist reproach bent on plundering the country he snatched from an old pro-Western reprobate - there is one conclusion that can be drawn. This is that the Democratic Republic of Congo (aka Congo Zaïre, aka Zaire, aka Belgian Congo) is once again on the verge of disintegration.

And its neighbours are gathering, either to snatch their share of the spoils of this African Great Game, or to prevent chaos from their borders spilling across their borders.

Angola is terrified of Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebels finding a friendly government in Kinshasa, which would help it to prosecute its war against the corrupt Marxist regime of Eduardo Dos Santos. Rumours that the United States, which for a while backed UN efforts to bring Dos Santos and Savimbi together, may now have given up on Dos Santos altogether, and started to wonder whether Savimbi might be able to bring peace to the war-ravaged country, will not have eased the paranoia in Luanda.

Paranoia, though, is also the prime mover of Mr Kabila's actions. He is supported by

Robert Mugabe - who is proving as loyal a friend to him as he is to the former Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, who has been sheltered at the expense of impoverished Zimbabwean taxpayers since 1981. Mr Mugabe has sent up to 12,000 troops half way across Africa to beat back the anti-Kabila rebels in Congo. It is believed that Mr Mugabe is sacrificing the lives of his troops in the Congo to protect mining interests there granted him by Mr Kabila when he snatched the

Congo's mineral rich Shaba province, and among the 4,000 were 600 of Mr Kabila's troops and police. Congo refugees in Zambia now number 16,000, and the stories they tell of the vicious rebel tactics do not speak of an army that is trying to win hearts and minds.

The eight Western tourists, including four Britons, hacked to death by Rwandan Hutu rebels on 2 March, were also caught up in the grotesque and savage conflict. The Hutus were remnants of the inter-hamwe militia that carried out the genocide in 1994 that saw

seven battalions in eastern Congo assisting the rebels.

Vast mineral wealth is not a necessary prerequisite for a war in Africa, as the recent almost incomprehensible spat between Eritrea and Ethiopia over a tiny triangle of desert so clearly and pathetically illustrated. However, minerals do help and both Shaba and eastern Congo are well blessed. Gold, oil, diamonds and other minerals are extracted here, as elsewhere in Africa, even in the midst of war. But while this is clearly one explanation of the presence of the foreign armies and of Western intelligence gathering, it is not the only one.

What the West wants for Africa is primarily stability and business opportunities. If it can provide none of this, then it only really matters to Africans themselves, and to those Western agencies who try to provide food and succour to the victims of disorder, corruption and war.

But here, perhaps, is the key to all the interest in the fate of Laurent Kabila. Even if the Britons were simply gathering information for evacuation plans, the future of our relations with Africa hangs to a large extent on the eventual denouement of this conflict. Britain has backed the Ugandan horse and the Rwandan horse, despite the considerable democratic deficit in those countries. In those countries it perceives something like a model it can do business with. If the influence of that model spreads, so business might spread.

If the kleptocratic Kabila model, the Dos Santos model, the Mugabe model, prevails then Africa will fall further off the map. And none of those leaders, at least, will be at all concerned.



Rwandan Army soldiers in Uganda, part of the complex to-ing and fro-ing across the area



Obasanjo: President-elect

Sanctions against Nigeria should be lifted, says Cook

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, promised Nigeria's president-elect yesterday that Britain would do its utmost to ensure European Union sanctions against his country would be ended when he takes power on 29 May by which time Nigeria should be restored to full Commonwealth membership.

Speaking after a meeting with Obasanjo, the re-

named general who will be Nigeria's first civilian ruler in 15 years, Mr Cook pledged Britain's support for Nigeria's new political era. "There are still two months in which things can go wrong," he said, "but I'm hopeful they won't go wrong."

As a precaution, he an-

nounced £750,000 of aid to help to restructure the Nigerian military, which still looms in the background, however discredited the army was in power.

These weeks at his estate here, where he farms cassava, maize, and livestock, will be General Obasanjo's last spell of relative tranquillity before he takes over the country that has the potential and resources to be

a regional superpower but which has been brought to its knees by economic mismanagement.

Nigeria has almost \$30bn (£18.5bn) of official debt, with little hope of a rescheduling deal with its main creditor countries until it reaches a monitoring agreement with the International Monetary Fund. This would place the IMF's seal of approval on more rigorous policies.

"The IMF will want to see that this new government behaves differently," Mr Cook warned after his meeting with the general. "They will want to see some progress towards tackling arrears before rescheduling."

This will be rendered all the more painful and difficult by the fall in the oil price, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of government revenue. Al-

though this year's budget has been based on oil at \$9 a barrel, some analysts predict the price could fall to \$7 or under.

Then there are Nigeria's chronic problems of epic corruption, unliveable cities, and deep ethnic unrest - epitomised by kidnappings of oil industry workers in the Niger delta, where the inhabitants are mired in desperate poverty.

The key foreign policy issue facing General Obasanjo will be Sierra Leone, whose government is only kept in power by the Nigerian-led Ecomog West African military force. He promised that Nigeria would remain loyal to Sierra Leone and that "we won't just pull out and abandon them".

Our great betrayal. Review, page 5

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Serbs on rampage as talks continue

BY EMMA DALY
in Belgrade

SERB FORCES rampaged through Albanian villages in Kosovo yesterday, burning houses and driving hundreds from their homes as US diplomats urged President Slobodan Milosevic to accept a peace deal for the province.

In Belgrade, Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill spent last night in talks with the Yugoslav President. The first meeting, which lasted three-and-a-half hours, broke up after lunch. The atmosphere was said to be "businesslike".

Few in Belgrade expect a swift result, as Serbia is disregarding Nato's threat to launch air strikes if a peace deal is not reached. A sign of Serb confidence is that they have not even halted attacks on Albanian villages for the duration of the American envoys' visit, as is their normal practice.

At Ivaja, close to the Mace-



donian border, reporters found most of the houses smouldering ruins yesterday, with dead animals littering the streets, after Serb forces moved in to destroy the local headquarters of a Kosovo Liberation Army brigade.

They also found the body of a man in civilian clothes who appeared to have been shot at close range and a blood-caked 84-year-old man who said he



Kosovo Albanians crying over the body of a KLA fighter found in the village of Ivaja after a Serb offensive

Oleg Popov

was beaten with rifle butts by Serb soldiers searching for KLA rebels.

A house used as the KLA headquarters was burnt-out and the interior of the mosque devastated. The exterior had been sprayed with bullets.

Some 400 inhabitants of Ivaja were rounded up by Serb forces after fleeing their homes. The men were separated and taken away to check

if they were affiliated to the KLA, an incident that international monitors called very worrying. "The majority were released but not all of them, and the police claim it has kept seven for questioning," said an official from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which is in charge of the international monitoring mission in Kosovo.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva said it was planning to evacuate women and children from Kollina, a village near Ivaja, which OSCE monitors say was seriously damaged on Tuesday. The attacks form a depressing backdrop to the talks in Belgrade. In theory, Mr Milosevic and his Kosovo Albanian enemies must agree to the ac-

cord by 15 March. "The situation is essentially deteriorating rather than improving," said Kris Janowski, a spokesman for the UNHCR. The KLA also seems increasingly reluctant to sign a deal. Pleurat Sejdu, the KLA representative in London, said the rebels would "not sign up while the war is going on in Kosovo" and there are "attacks on our villages".

Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister, Vojislav Seselj, congratulated Macedonian waiters for beating up a group of British soldiers during a brawl last week at a restaurant in the capital, Skopje. Some 3,000 British troops are in Macedonia as the advance guard for a Nato peace force in Kosovo. "The whole of Serbia is delighted with the lesson you taught the English occupiers," Mr Seselj said.

Life for racist letter bomber

BY ADAM LEEB

AN AUSTRIAN neo-fascist was sentenced to life in prison yesterday after killing four people and maiming several more.

Franz Fuchs, 49, said he was a member of the Bajuvarian Liberation Army which, he claimed, wants to reunite German-speaking peoples in Bavaria, the Alps and along the Danube.

He was found guilty by a court in Graz, eastern Austria, on all counts, including four murders and a dozen cases of causing grievous bodily harm with bombs, mostly hidden in letters. Court psychiatrists said he was a loner and the BLA was a figment of his imagination.

In February 1995, Fuchs, a reclusive former engineer, planted a pipe bomb that killed four gypsies in eastern Austria. He was responsible for 28 further bomb attacks, but his most prominent victim was Helmut Zilk, a former mayor of Vienna who was outspun in his support for refugees and ethnic minorities. Mr Zilk lost his left hand in one explosion.

Fuchs lost two fingers when a letter bomb went off at his home in December 1993 and in 1997 he lost both his hands when another bomb exploded just before his arrest in his home town of Graz, 140 miles south-west of Vienna.

He was banned from the courtroom during most of his trial after shouting racist slogans whenever he appeared in the dock. On Tuesday he yelled: "Long live the Bajuvarian Liberation Army. Long live the Germanic ethnic group."

He will serve his sentence in a prison for he mentally disturbed.

The verdict of Fuchs comes after the Austrian far-right received its biggest electoral boost for years, with the xenophobic Freedom Party winning 42.1 per cent of the vote in the province of Carinthia last Sunday. The party leader, Jörg Haider, who once praised Hitler's employment policies, is now the front-runner for the post of regional governor.

Parisians quarrel over crumbling cultural palace

A LEAKY glass roof, bolts falling from the framework, and foundations sinking into the ground: the Grand Palais, formerly one of the most visited exhibition halls in Paris, is in "a perilous condition", according to an official report leaked to the newspaper *Le Figaro*.

The Palais, built with the Eiffel Tower for the Paris Exhibition of 1900, lies a stone's throw from the Place de la Concorde and the Champs-Élysées. At the beginning of the century it distinguished itself by exhibiting artists who were excluded from

BY CLAIRE SOARES
in Paris

the principal Paris museums: Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso.

Like its sister building across the river, the Grand Palais was the subject of a furious controversy during its construction. Parisians thought it ugly and out of keeping with the beautiful architecture of the city.

This controversy remains today, as to what to do with the disintegrating building. The main nave was closed six years ago, when a bolt from the roof fell on to a Jean-Paul Gaultier

designed snuff box, part of a design exhibition. Some want it knocked down, others fight to restore it to its former glory. Serge Louveau, former head of the Louvre and author of the leaked report, falls into the latter category. He estimates that it will cost about £100m to repair the Grand Palais.

The most urgent work is needed on the south section, which has sunk 15cm into the ground since its construction. "To stop this worrying development, we have to pump concrete under the supports of the Palais as soon as possible",

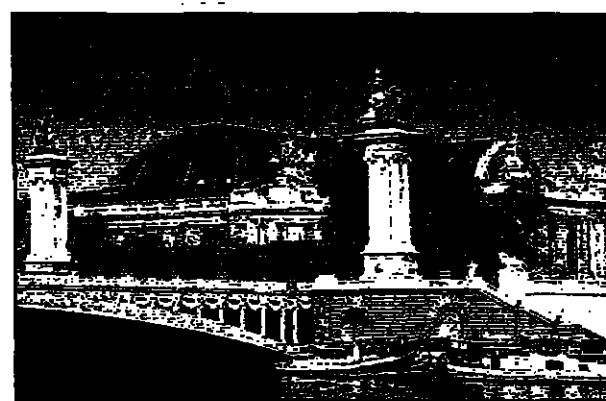
Mr Louveau said. This may not be all that soon. The French Culture Minister, Catherine Trautmann, notorious for her slow response to problems, has had the Louvre report in her possession for two months.

Furthermore the 400 million francs that would allow the initial work to proceed has been blocked by the Finance Ministry. This will delay the start of any repair work for at least six months.

Mr Louveau's report makes damning judgements on the misuse of the building and its lack of management.

At present the administration, controlled by the Culture Ministry, consists of two caretakers and two workmen. Mr Louveau suggests an independent managerial structure, which would be responsible for, among other things, maintenance and safety of the building. He would also like to see a better co-ordination of those groups allowed to lease the buildings around the main nave.

The renovated Grand Palais that he envisages would be a warm and inviting cultural centre. If the building doesn't crumble in the meantime.



The Grand Palais, Paris, seen from across the Seine; about £100m is needed for its restoration

Sam Rutherford

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BUSINESS

Byers to take politics out of merger decisions

SWEEPING PLANS to take the politics out of merger decisions by allowing independent competition authorities to rule on whether takeover bids should be blocked or allowed through were unveiled yesterday by the Government.

Stephen Byers, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, told a post-Budget conference of business leaders: "Just as we have given independence to the Bank of England, so the time has come to remove politicians from the merger regime." It was not the job of ministers to "second guess boardroom decisions," he added.

Mr Byers later told the Commons that business needed stability and confidence and for that

BY MICHAEL HARRISON
Business Editor

reason it was important that decisions on mergers were not based on short-term political considerations.

The Government's proposals could mean that ministers no longer have a say, even in controversial mergers such as the bid for Manchester United by Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB.

Under Mr Byers' plan, an independent competition authority - possibly the Office of Fair Trading - would have the power to decide on mergers by applying a competition test.

The only mergers where ministers would have the ultimate say were those which

raised wider public interest concerns such as defence and national security. But even here, Mr Byers said, it would be for the competition authority and not politicians to decide whether the public interest test applied.

The Government is due to issue a consultative document in the next two months. However, Mr Byers said the new regime would not be introduced in the current Parliament since it would require primary legislation. This means the earliest the change is likely to take place is 2002.

Despite this, competition experts said that Mr Byers would now be under increased pressure to accept the advice of the competition authorities in ruling

on future mergers. At present he has the power to wave a merger through even if the Monopolies Commission rules it would operate against the public interest. He can also choose to disregard advice from the OFT on whether or not a merger should be referred in the first instance.

One of his predecessors, Margaret Beckett, Labour's first trade and industry secretary since it returned to power in 1997, gained a reputation for surprising the markets by ignoring her own competition authorities on a regular basis.

The Confederation of British Industry said the idea of judging takeovers and mergers against economic and competitive criteria was welcome. How-

ever, Adair Turner, its director general, said consultation needed to be thorough and any changes must pass the test of improving predictability.

The overhaul of mergers policy came alongside a raft of other measures to promote enterprise and competition. Mr Byers has launched a review to establish whether British consumers are paying too much for goods and services compared with other countries and whether the root cause of this is lack of competition.

He also announced funding of £100m for a new Small Business Service, which would give small and medium-sized firms a voice in government.

Outlook, page 17

Free Net access services get OfTel reprieve

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

OFTEL, the telecoms watchdog, has reprieved free Internet services by rejecting a plea from British Telecom to change the system of charging for Internet calls.

In a paper published yesterday David Edmonds, OfTel director-general, proposed not to change the current charging structure, known as the Number Translation Service, for the next two-and-a-half years.

The proposal is a reprieve for Freeview, the free Net service provided by retailer Dixons, and a host of similar providers. The services, which have grown explosively since their launch last year, have abandoned fixed charges for Net access, choosing to rely only on the revenue they make from local calls.

The proposal is also a victory for telecom operators such as Eircom, Colt and Scottish Telecom, which have lobbied heavily against any changes.

The services rely on the NTS formula, which allows them to keep a large share of the revenue earned from a local telephone call, while BT and other local network operators such as Cable & Wireless Communications keep a relatively small amount.

BT and CWC argued that the Internet explosion was clogging up their local networks, but the NTS formula gave them no incentive to invest in extra capacity. The companies had lobbied to keep a greater share of local revenues, which would probably have forced operators such as Freeview to start charging for their service.

Mr Edmonds said: "A decision potentially increasing charges to consumers is not justified on the evidence I have considered. I do not see the need to change the principle of the NTS formula in the short term." He said OfTel would consider the issue again when revising BT's price controls. The current pricing regime ends in August 2001.

Mr Edmonds challenged Internet providers to make the cost of accessing the Net even lower by finding alternative sources of revenue. "A service that is supported through advertising and sales on the website could be priced below the current local call rate," he said, pointing to BT's plans to introduce a new set of price points by year-end.

Some observers believe the cost of Internet calls could fall to zero as service providers make revenues from other sources. X-Stream, the Internet company that pioneered the Freeview concept, this week trailed a dial-up Internet service using an 0800 number, which is free of charge to the user.

BRIEFING

Oil price rises to over \$12 a barrel

CRUDE OIL prices broke through the \$12 a barrel barrier yesterday, amid speculation about cuts in world supply. Opec and non-Opec producers are close to agreement on supply cuts, according to a Saudi official, and some key Opec members are expected to meet in Amsterdam today ahead of their full summit later this month.

Meanwhile, the monthly report from the International Energy Agency underlined the fragile state of world oil demand. The IEA cut its forecast for 1999 demand growth to 900,000 barrels per day from 1 million barrels per day.

Pub group gives millennium cheer

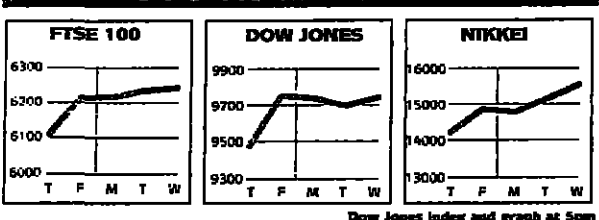
ALLIED DOMECO, one of Britain's biggest pub groups, has promised some millennium cheer to its customers and staff by agreeing to freeze prices and boost pay for those working on New Year's Eve. The company pledged normal prices on its drinks for the millennium celebrations at its 2,000 managed pubs, and will pay its bar staff treble time plus 5 per cent of the evening's takings. Another 5 per cent will go to the pub manager. Allied Domeco controls the Big Steak, Firkin and Mr Q's branded pub outlets. Separately, the company said it will pay its 15p interim dividend in April rather than in August as originally planned.

Peugeot to create 900 jobs

THE COVENTRY-based carmaker Peugeot confirmed that it is to create 900 jobs by increasing production of the 206 range at its Ryton plant.

Stephen Byers, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said that 200 of the new jobs would be for the long-term unemployed, taken on through the Government's New Deal programme. Peugeot is adding a third shift at Ryton, raising output to 3,400 cars a week from 2,500 at present.

STOCK MARKETS



INDICES

Index	Close	Change	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	6241.90	3.80	6319.80	4599.20	2.60
FTSE 250	5406.00	33.30	5670.90	4247.60	3.16
FTSE 350	2963.90	4.40	2978.70	2210.40	2.59
FTSE All Share	2865.81	4.68	2886.52	2143.53	2.73
FTSE SmallCap	2334.00	11.20	2493.80	1834.40	3.50
FTSE Fledgling	1270.70	4.20	1317.10	1046.20	4.31
FTSE AIM	841.70	1.40	1146.90	761.30	1.11
FTSE Europe 100	2853.76	-5.69	3079.27	2018.15	2.10
FTSE Europe 300	1237.69	-1.66	1332.07	880.63	1.98
Dow Jones	9708.46	17.48	10133.99	7400.30	1.83
Nikkei	15480.00	381.30	17128.97	12787.80	0.92
Hang Seng	10749.01	218.08	11926.16	6544.79	3.32
Dax	4721.41	-37.05	5217.83	3833.71	1.84
S&P 500	1278.58	-1.51	1293.74	923.32	1.25
Nasdaq	2391.02	-1.95	2533.44	1357.09	0.29
Toronto 300	6544.30	54.73	7837.70	5320.90	1.62
Brazil Bovespa	9741.66	255.30	12339.14	4575.69	6.38
Belgium Be20	3277.94	-27.85	3713.21	2696.26	2.14
Amerigo Indx	520.66	-1.61	600.65	366.58	1.98
France CAC 40	4162.31	2.51	4404.94	2881.21	1.88
Milan MIB30	56870.00	488.00	59170.00	24175.00	1.11
Madrid Iboex 35	9940.10	24.80	10989.80	6869.90	1.76
Irish Allshare	5364.85	-39.27	5581.70	3732.57	1.51
S Korea Comp	569.27	-3.58	651.95	277.37	0.26
Australia ASX	106.60	0.36	2948.70	2386.70	3.15

INTEREST RATES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	30 year	Long bond	Yr change
UK	5.47	-2.09	5.43	-2.07	4.81	-1.36	4.61
US	5.00	-0.69	5.31	-0.51	5.19	-0.46	5.56
Japan	0.21	-0.53	0.26	-0.44	1.75	-0.08	2.83
Germany	3.08	-0.43	3.08	-0.67	4.08	-0.83	5.05

CURRENCIES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	30 year	Long bond	Yr change
\$/£	1.6266	+0.92c	1.6410	0.8148	-0.35p	0.6094	0.6094
\$/¥	1.4842	-0.19c	1.4079	0.9126	-17.5c	0.8573	0.8573
¥/£	150.84	-41.38	209.11	119.85	-41.52	127.38	127.38
£/index	102.70	+0.20	105.40	108.10	-0.50	108.90	108.90

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr ago
Brent Oil (\$)	11.37	0.40	12.28	GDP (US\$)	115.40	3.00	112.04
Gold (\$)	292.75	1.00	296.00	RPI	163.40	2.40	159.57
Silver (\$)	5.24	-0.08	6.12	Base Rates	5.50	7.25	

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.4532	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.39
Austria (schillings)	19.77	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1660
Belgium (francs)	58.07	New Zealand (\$)	2.8895
Canada (\$)	2.3905	Norway (kroner)	12.38
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8315	Portugal (escudos)	286.59
Denmark (kroner)	10.77	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.8961
Finland (markka)	8.5870	Singapore (\$)	2.6514
France (francs)	9.4435	South Africa (rand)	9.5369
Germany (marks)	2.8252	Spain (pesetas)	239.10
Greece (drachma)	463.68	Sweden (kronor)	12.93
Hong Kong (pounds)	12.16	Switzerland (francs)	2.3118
Ireland (pounds)	1.1325	Thailand (bahts)	54.43
India (rupees)	61.75	Turkey (liras)	562.421
Israel (shekels)	6.0152	USA (\$)	1.5808
Italy (lira)	2799		
Japan (yen)	191.36		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.8233		
Malta (lira)	0.6160		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook



Marjorie Scardino, Pearson chief executive, and John Makinson, finance director, yesterday

Kalpesh Lathigra

Pearson weighs up New York listing

PEARSON, the media group, is considering obtaining a listing for its shares on the New York Stock Exchange later this year in an attempt to encourage share ownership among its employees in the United States, writes Peter Thal Larsen.

"We are looking at a New York listing more actively than we have done for some years," John Makinson, Pearson's finance director, said yesterday.

"If we did go ahead it would be less for investor relation purposes than to expand employee share ownership."

Pearson's US employee base expanded massively last year when it bought Simon & Schuster's educational publishing division from Viacom, the media conglomerate, for \$4.6bn.

The company has also been investing heavily in expanding the North American circulation of the Financial Times.

The news emerged as Pearson reported operating profits of £388m for the year to December 1998, an increase of 19 per cent on sales of £2.4bn.

Excluding the effect of acquisitions, disposals and exchange rates, sales increased by just over 5 per cent, while underlying profits were up 8 per cent.

Marjorie Scardino, Pearson's chief executive, said the figures

showed the effects of past investment and of the company concentrating on its larger businesses. She also set a target for the company to achieve double-digit earnings growth, most of which is likely to come from increased sales.

However, the results disappointed the City, which marked Pearson's shares down 85p to 1337p yesterday. Analysts said the company's organic growth

was not enough to justify its share price. Pearson shares have doubled in value since Ms Scardino took the helm at the beginning of 1997.

Ms Scardino said the company would continue to invest in the Internet as a distribution platform for its products. "All our businesses have what you need to get eyeballs," she said. "They have brands and they have content."

SFX withdraws Wembley bid

THE CONTROVERSIAL deal to sell Wembley Stadium to a trust backed by the Football Association for £106m looks set to go ahead today after SFX Entertainment, the American leisure giant, yesterday abandoned its plans to mount a bid for the stadium's parent company, Wembley.

SFX was thought to have pulled out last night after Wembley's board, led by its three executive directors, refused to postpone today's extraordinary general meeting in order to allow the US company more time to prepare a bid.

SFX had indicated that it

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

would be prepared to bid up to 450p a share in cash for Wembley, valuing the company at £250m. However, the group had asked for several weeks to allow it to complete its due diligence, a request which was refused.

SFX is thought to have proposed a deal whereby the stadium would still be sold to the trust in order for it to be redeveloped in time for the 2006 World Cup, which England hopes to stage. However, the US company had planned to negotiate a deal which would allow

it to manage the stadium and the grounds around it. Apart from the stadium, Wembley controls the Wembley Arena and the conference facilities, as well as a large plot of land.

Wembley's three non-executive directors - Roger Brooke, Peter Mead and Jarvis Astaire - have openly lobbied against the deal agreed between Wembley and the FA and have actively encouraged bidders to enter the fray. SFX made its interest known after ENIC, the investment company which owns a stake in Glasgow Rangers, submitted a conditional cash and shares bid.

However Wembley's executive directors, led by the chairman Claes Hultman, have rejected offers from both SFX and ENIC as undervaluing the company.

They have also refused to delay the vote, arguing that it would jeopardise the proposed deal with the FA. The executive directors have promised to return a proportion of the £106m to shareholders.

Despite the setback, it is thought that SFX will continue to look for other investment opportunities in continental Europe. Wembley shares closed down 3.5p at 364p.

Nissan renews attempt to tie up with Renault

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

NISSAN YESTERDAY redoubled its efforts to forge an alliance with Renault after negotiations over DaimlerChrysler taking an equity stake in the ailing Japanese car manufacturer collapsed.

The Renault chairman, Louis Schweitzer, confirmed at the Geneva Motor Show that the French group was continuing to study a tie-up with Nissan. In Tokyo, a Nissan spokesman said it would seek other partners, with Renault high on the list of possible tie-ups.

DaimlerChrysler is thought to have pulled out of the talks because of concerns over Nissan's

\$36bn of debts. The negotiations' collapse also means that DaimlerChrysler will not buy Nissan's 40 per cent stake in the truck maker Nissan Diesel.

After meeting the Nissan president Yoshikazu Hanawa in Tokyo, the DaimlerChrysler chairman, Jürgen Schrempp, said: "We discussed our options very openly and in a friendly atmosphere, but finally decided not to pursue a participation."

Mr Schrempp said the two companies would continue with joint projects for light trucks.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

IN BUSY trading - turnover topped 1.1 billion - shares moved ahead with the less fashionable non-Footsie stocks making the running. The blue chip Footsie index ended 3.8 points higher at 6,241.5. At one time it was down 69.1. The supporting indices were much stronger with the mid cap up 33.3 to 5,409 and the small cap 11.2 to 2,384. Reuters, the information group, was the best performing blue chip, surging 65p to a 967.5p peak following investment meetings.

Derek Pain, page 21

NEW YORK

US STOCKS were mixed, with oil producers rising on the back of higher crude prices but technology stocks weaker. Chevron and Exxon were among the major gainers, up 3 3/16 and 2 1/8 respectively. The oil producers helped the Dow Jones 37.74 points higher to 9,731.5 by the mid-afternoon. The Nasdaq was modestly higher, up 3.83 points at 2,396.77. Fallers included Computer Associates, which fell 16 per cent following a broker downgrade.

TOKYO

JAPANESE STOCKS hit a seven-month high as the "Sony effect" continued to give share prices a boost. Sony leapt more than 8 per cent on the back of positive sentiment generated by Tuesday's announcement of a major restructuring effort. Stocks in other electrical groups also rose, pushing the Nikkei 225 to a close of 15,480, up 383.3 points, or 2.54 per cent. However, analysts were sceptical about the sustainability of the rally, noting that domestic houses had already started to take profits.

PARIS

THE PARIS bourse out-performed other European markets following BNP's audacious bid for rival French banks Paribas and Société Générale. Shares in BNP, Paribas and Société Générale were all suspended yesterday, but news of the bid drove financial stocks higher. The CAC-40 ended the day marginally higher, up 2.51 points at 4,162.31. The insurer Axa - which has stakes in all three banks - was the major gainer. Axa shares closed nearly 5 per cent higher at 121.5 euros.

SAO PAULO

RENEWED CURRENCY strength helped Brazilian stocks rise by almost 3 per cent yesterday, with the Bovespa index trading up 256.24 points at 9,740.25. The real continued to firm following this week's deal with the IMF. By early afternoon, the real was trading at 1.87 to the dollar, well above the psychologically important 2 to the dollar barrier. Investors welcomed news that the Brazilian central bank had been permitted to use up to \$80n until June in foreign currency intervention.

IN BRIEF
Aerospatiale profits nosedive

Air traffic rises

Face's hat-trick

Peel to buy back

Prince's visit triggers protest

BY MARGARET TANNER

HUNDREDS OF large demonstrators gathered in the city centre to protest against the Prince of Wales's visit to the city. The protesters, who were mostly young people, held up signs and banners and sang songs. They also set off fireworks and smoke bombs. The Prince's visit to the city is part of a tour of the UK. He is expected to arrive in the city on Thursday. The protesters are angry at the Prince's involvement in the arms trade and his support for the monarchy. They also want to see the Prince's private life exposed.

The Budget's hidden cost to business

HOW DOES the Budget look to business the day after the night before? Rather worse, is the honest truth. Business has been the victim of the Government's fiscal tightening over the last two years, so it might have been reasonable to expect, now that there is to be a £50bn loosening over the next three, that business would benefit, at least correspondingly. No such luck. For most businesses, this Budget is pretty much fiscally neutral. But for a sizeable minority, it contains another little kick in the goolies.

The hidden tax this time is an apparently unilateral decision by Customs and Excise to start charging VAT on outsourced service provision. Most profoundly affected will be the City, where all kinds of back office services from billing to custody are outsourced between organisations in an effort to cut and share cost. Also affected will be specialist outsourcing companies such as EDS, Unisys and Andersen Consulting.

Presumably the Chancellor knew of this move - which was buried almost to the point of invisibility in the Treasury's pack of Budget press releases - when he said in his speech on Wednesday that



OUTLOOK

there were no plans to increase the scope of VAT. Given that the extra revenue raised through the ending of this exemption could run to hundreds of millions of pounds a year, it would be odd if he didn't.

At a business breakfast yesterday with the Chancellor organised by Deloitte & Touche, there was guarded praise for Mr Brown's third Budget. If nothing else, it was being said by industrialists and company directors, there were no nasty surprises for business this time round, unlike the others, and we should at least be thankful for that. That judgement may need to be reassessed.

But there is a deeper concern

about this Budget, one of whose themes was meant to be "enterprise" - of laying the foundations for the Micros of tomorrow. There were lots of gadgets, gimmicks and any number of business friendly noises. Plainly Mr Brown was intent on walking his talk; some of his measures were certainly better than a poke in the eye. But somehow or other, it all felt a bit flat.

This was not the stuff from which the next generation of Micros is going to spring, that's for sure. For that, a much more radically tax-cutting budget for business is required. Some of the tax breaks he did announce were not, in any case, all that new. The new 10 per cent starting rate for corporation tax doesn't, on close inspection, apply to the first £50,000 of profit, but is tapered after the first £10,000.

And while this plainly benefits that vast hinterland of small, generally family owned, businesses that provide the bulk of employment in Britain, these are not the sort of entrepreneurially driven, aspirational companies that have spawned the high-tech revolution of America's West Coast. Most of these businesses are quite happy to chug along with their fewer than 10

employees and profits of less than £50,000 a year. They either can't be bothered with, or don't want to be, the next Microsoft.

Mr Brown is showing all the right intentions, but in the end he's bottled out of the radical measures necessary to create a fully fledged free market, enterprise culture. His other priorities too much prevent him from following those probusiness instincts to their logical conclusion.

There is, however, one measure which does seem to promise genuine progress - the proposed new employee share scheme. This is precisely the sort of radical approach that is needed, assuming the Government's proposals live up to their promise. The details of this scheme are at this stage deeply confusing, and what little literature is available on it, apparently contradictory. But on the face of it, the intention is to offer employees a major tax incentive to pay their staff in shares, as well as employees a big tax break in buying shares in their employers.

Such an approach, once again assuming it is not made impotent by its terms and conditions, offers the opportunity of real workplace re-

form, of genuine partnership between employer and employee, and of proper worker participation and involvement in the affairs of their companies. It is a splendid thing; ministers and industry must work hard to ensure the ideal is not undermined by the process of consultation and implementation.

Competition

WHILE GORDON BROWN was busy handing out sweeties to the entrepreneurial classes in Tuesday's Budget, another arm of government was preparing to get tough with big business. As ever, we wait to see whether the rhetoric is matched with action. But if Stephen Byers is as good as his word, then the vested monopolies which continue to run significant chunks of industry and our public services are in for a rough time.

Along with the Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has decided that part of the malaise afflicting the British economy is that there is not enough competition. In order to treat that malaise, he has opted for a two-pronged attack.

On one flank, the prices that are charged on the high street will be held up for comparison with those which consumers in other countries pay. If they are too large to be explained away by factors such as wage and transport costs, or the burden of regulatory compliance, Mr Byers will conclude it is because of a lack of competition. Having established the cause of the problem, the Office of Fair Trading will then be invited to seek a remedy which normally requires divestment of assets or changes in behaviour.

From the other flank, Mr Byers has promised to overhaul mergers policy so that it operates akin to monetary policy. Ministers can no longer meddle with interest rates for short-term political gain and Mr Byers has decided the same should apply to takeover bids. Instead an independent competition authority will be the final arbiter, testing mergers against their effect on competition. The only exceptions will be where there are wider public interest concerns - something that will need to be strictly defined to prevent backdoor political intervention.

It is easy to see why the big

battalions of industry were not exactly ecstatic at the prospect yesterday. Gone will be the chance to sway a decision by whispering sweet nothings into a minister's ear.

It is a measure of how far New Labour has travelled that it should now want to hand over merger control lock stock and barrel to an independent body. When it came to power, it favoured blocking all mergers unless the parties involved could demonstrate they were in the public interest - a definition which would have encompassed everything from jobs to regional impact.

Unfortunately, Mr Byers' ideas have some way to travel yet. There are no plans to introduce the necessary legislation this side of a general election and, even if the law were changed, Brussels these days is the arbiter on most big and contentious mergers. Mr Byers should nonetheless stick to his guns and in the meantime show willingness by practising what he preaches. He could kick off the new era by standing aside when the monopolies report on BSkyB's bid for Manchester United hits the streets.

Dresdner may join French bank bids

SHARES IN DRESDNER, the German banking giant, soared nearly 8 per cent yesterday amid feverish speculation that it may be preparing to enter the battle for Societe Generale and Paribas, whose £17bn (£10.5bn) merger was gatecrashed by a \$37bn counterbid from rival BNP on Tuesday night.

Some sources said Dresdner would mount its own bid for either SocGen or Paribas. Others say it might join BNP in its bid.

Bankers said BNP in making the first hostile bid in the French financial sector in years, had effectively burst the French banking market wide open, creating the opportunity for a foreign bank to pull off a major deal. One banker said last night: "If someone wants one of them, now is the time to move."

Banking sources said that even if the BNP proposal collapsed after being rejected by both SocGen and Paribas yes-

terday, there was little doubt that all three banks were now effectively in play.

ABN Amro, the Dutch bank that had tentative discussions with both SocGen and BNP late last year, was watching the position carefully, as was General Electric, the US financial services giant known to be interested in some of Paribas's consumer finance businesses.

Banking sources said, however, that the pressure was very much on Dresdner, which has a 1 per cent cross-holding with BNP. "There is an assumption that Dresdner will be involved in some way."

However, its position is complicated by the fact that its largest shareholder, German insurer Allianz, is manoeuvring for a stake in Credit Lyonnais, the French bank that is



BNP's gatecrashing of the SocGen/Paribas battle has effectively burst the French bank sector wide open

due to be privatised this summer, and may not risk antagonising the French government.

SocGen and Paribas yesterday presented a united front, jointly appointing Rothschild & Cie to handle their defence.

The two banks rejected the BNP offer, saying a three-way merger was a "hazardous venture" and unlikely to succeed.

There were strong suspicions yesterday that BNP chairman Michel Pebeureau's real motive in launching the bid was to force the hand of the French

government, which had effectively isolated the bank by giving its blessing to the earlier SG Paribas deal and then rejecting BNP's bid for a controlling stake in Credit Lyonnais.

Mr Pebeureau said yesterday he would be prepared to consider a two-way deal with either target bank if the three-way plan he has proposed did not succeed.

Yesterday's developments rekindled takeover speculation throughout the European banking sector.

Signs of revival in house market

THE FIRST signs of a strong pick-up in the housing market emerged yesterday when one of the country's biggest chains of estate agents reported new sales up 8 per cent on last year.

Countrywide Assured, a listed estate agent and surveyor with 750 branches, said it had recorded the biggest number of new sales in February since its business first took shape in 1994.

Mike Nowe, finance director, said: "We're now optimistic to bullish, and business has been very good. There is a lot of activity, a lot of offers and our surveys are very busy indeed."

Business at Countrywide's conveyancing division has already doubled on the same period last year; to more than 1,000 instructions every week.

The pick-up contrasts with Countrywide's results for 1998,

which showed profits edging up by 7 per cent but earnings falling. The shares rose 9 per cent to 137p, valuing the firm at £455m.

Results from surveyors and estate agents are often a leading indicator of the housing market's fortunes because they arrive ahead of data on mortgages and house prices.

Last week the Housebuilders' Federation produced a report showing the strongest demand for new houses since July 1997.

Steve Bell, an economist at Deutsche Bank, said: "I think we are going to get a strong market in the next few months. It's benefiting from low fixed-rate mortgages. What is harder to say is whether it will be sustained: many people are still afraid of losing their jobs."

IN BRIEF

Aérospatiale profits nosedive
AÉROSPATIALE, the French defence and aircraft group to be privatised this year, said profits fell by more than half last year to Fr408m (£43m) mainly due to exchange rate factors. Its shareholding in Airbus Industrie produced a loss of Fr68m compared with a Fr1.1bn profit in 1997.

Air traffic rises
PASSENGER NUMBERS at BAA, operator of seven UK airports including Heathrow and Gatwick, grew 8 per cent in February to 7.5 million. The biggest rise was at Stansted, where traffic rose by 50 per cent.

Wace's hat-trick
WACE, the digital imaging group, is considering its third takeover bid this year after Applied Graphics Technologies, a US media services firm, tabled a \$57m cash offer, valuing its shares at 72p. Last month Wace agreed a 70p-a-share offer from AGT's US rival Shaw-Wace advised shareholders to take no action until it had consulted Shaw-Wace. Its shares closed unchanged at 74.5p.

Peel to buy back
SHARES IN Peel Holdings soared 134.5p to 633.5p after the property group confirmed plans to take the company private. In a statement to the stock market, Peel stressed that the process was at an early stage. Reports said plans to buy back the shares would value the group at about £700m.

Albright axes 200 UK jobs as profits are hit

ALBRIGHT & WILSON, the chemicals group being stalked by two suitors, is to axe 10 per cent of UK staff in two years in an effort to fight a sharp downturn in several key markets.

The company, which this week received a \$408m bid from US rival Albemarle and also had an approach from Rhodia of France, is preparing to cut around 200 of its 1,800-strong British workforce at a cost of £1.2m.

The job losses are likely to be spread among A&W's four plants in Avonmouth, Birmingham, Manchester and Cumbria. Insiders said that about 50 people had already been told they were to lose their jobs.

The redundancies follow last year's sweeping restruc-

turing, which cost £1.2m and caused the departure of 200 people.

Paul Rocheleau, the chief executive, said the measures were needed to cut costs in the face of tough trading conditions.

The UK business of A&W, which makes phosphates for detergents and carbonated drinks, had been hit hard by the strength of the pound, the loss of major customers and a slump in exports to Asia-Pacific, he added.

"These measures are very painful, but we have to reflect the economic reality we are in," he said. Mr Rocheleau pointed out that A&W's final

results yesterday underlined the company's plight.

Pre-tax profit suffered a £13m hit from the pound and the Asian crisis and fell by 20 per cent to £48.3m. The chief executive said trading in 1999 would remain tough as there were "few signs that the economic climate and market conditions... will show any near-term improvement".

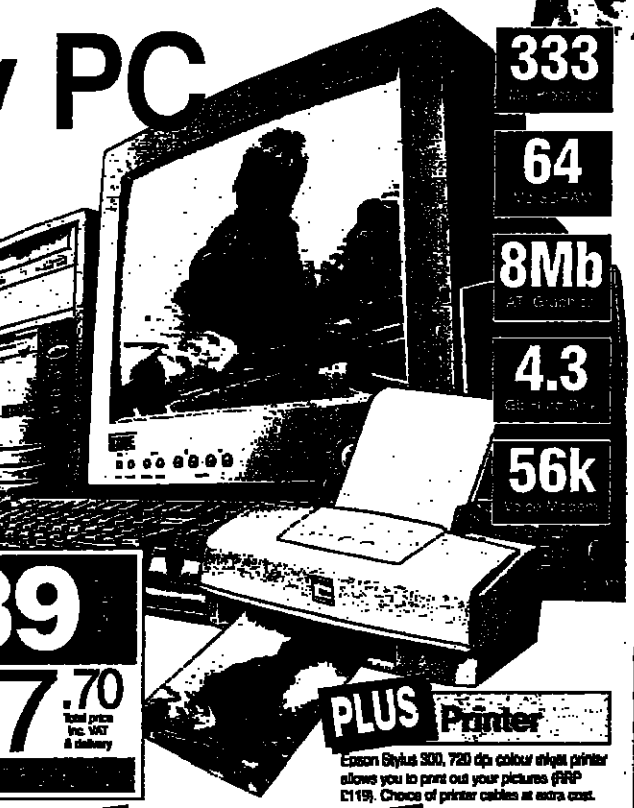
Despite Mr Rocheleau's downbeat comments, industry experts believe that Rhodia or another bidder could trump Albemarle's agreed 130p-a-share cash offer.

Rhodia, owned by the drug company Rhone-Poulenc, yesterday said that it was still considering whether to launch a counterbid.

COMPANY RESULTS									
Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-ov			
Abel Group (F)	191.1m (185.30m)	18.8m (15.23m)	8.4p (7.9p)	3.0p (2.9p)	04.08.98	10.05.98			
Aggregate Industries (F)	833.7m (833.7m)	76.1m (46.4m)	4.3p (2.9p)	2.1p (2.0p)	09.07.98				
Albright & Wilson (F)	730.2m (853.2m)	48.3m (61.7m)	10.8p (14.7p)	7.15p (7.15p)	27.05.98	22.03.98			
AMEC (F)	3.87m (4.14m)	-94.0m (-98.0m)	-8.6p (-10.1p)	6.0p (6.0p)	01.07.98	04.05.98			
Arco International (F)	10.44m (10.8m)	1.25m (0.52m)	2.1p (1.7p)	-					
Bovis Lend Lease (F)	587.8m (540.8m)	82.1m (65.5m)	26.7p (20.2p)	12.25p (11.25p)	01.07.98	22.03.98			
Chemicals (F)	81.57m (81.7m)	5.9m (5.78m)	52.1p (52.3p)	10.0p (10.0p)	10.05.98	10.05.98			
Chemicals Investment Corp (F)	552.7m (547.4m)	55.7m (52.5m)	12.7p (15.5p)	3.5p (2.9p)	27.05.98	22.03.98			
Dairy Farm Int Holdings (F)	55.78m (55.8m)	199.8m (140.1m)	8.46p (6.26p)	6.0p (6.0p)	01.07.98	22.03.98			
Headway (F)	10.01m (11.21m)	0.58m (0.77m)	2.9p (3.8p)	0.95p (0.95p)	07.05.98	22.03.98			
Haywood Williams Day (F)	880.0m (832.75m)	83.8m (43.7m)	52.1p (29.3p)	14.55p (14.5p)	07.05.98	22.03.98			
Holmes Place (F)	37.15m (35.35m)	7.25m (5.42m)	8.01p (8.16p)	3.5p (3.0p)	07.05.98	22.03.98			
Imperial Group (F)	EUR 283.97m (280.27m)	12.53m (8.59m)	6.26p (6.11p)	2.45p (2.13p)	01.04.98	22.03.98			
Imperial (F)	18.5m (15.21m)	5.22m (3.11m)	25.82p (18.12p)	5.0p (4.4p)	21.05.98	19.04.98			
Johns-Manville & Co (F)	278.2m (228.8m)	22.7m (12.7m)	21.1p (11.3p)	5.5p (-)	21.05.98	22.03.98			
Johnson & Johnson (F)	1.48m (1.4m)	38.4m (43.7m)	12.3p (12.9p)	5.5p (4.9p)	01.07.98	22.03.98			
Parsons Group (F)	2.26m (2.25m)	62.0m (59.0m)	42.0p (34.5p)	21.0p (18.5p)	01.07.98	22.03.98			
PBS Group (F)	333.8m (353.1m)	-3.5m (41.2m)	-5.1p (6.57p)	3.85p (-)	01.07.98	22.03.98			
PFS Group (F)	102.82m (91.55m)	4.07m (3.05m)	10.9p (9.3p)	4.2p (4.0p)	06.05.98	22.03.98			
Rage Software (F)	3.1m (0.90m)	0.810m (-0.350m)	0.19p (-0.14p)	-	22.05.98	22.03.98			
Raychem Plastics (F)	457.3m (410.0m)	36.5m (28.3m)	15.9p (16.0p)	-	22.05.98	22.03.98			
Talbot & Wilson Group (F)	1.155m (964.0m)	26.02m (20.23m)	38.3p (41.9p)	20.0p (18.5p)	22.05.98	22.03.98			

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Budget analysis: Business gains and public finances are kept on prudent course, say institute's experts

IFS applauds Chancellor's hat-trick

GORDON BROWN appeared yesterday to have pulled off an enviable hat-trick, with a Budget that kept the public finances on a prudent course, made most people better off, and on balance helped rather than hindered business.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies yesterday gave each of these aspects of the Budget a cautious welcome, although with stronger reservations about the Chancellor's measures to boost enterprise.

The IFS described their likely impact as "very minor" and unlikely to reverse British productivity. Tuesday's Budget followed two that raised corporate taxation. However, its analysis confirmed that the changes in personal taxation and excise

BY DIANE COYLE
AND LEA PATERSON

duties left many more gainers than losers; overall, each tenth of income distribution would gain when all the measures came into effect, some low-paid households by nearly £4 a week but the richest by less than £1 a week.

Within each group, 10 to 15 per cent of households lose out, except in the top group where about a third are losers. Smokers, drivers of big cars and childless families are more likely to be in that minority.

Higher tobacco excise duties were the only measure to hit any group significantly. That impact is concentrated on the lowest-paid two-tenths of the

population, which has more smokers. All types of families with children - lone parents and one and two-earner households - would gain.

The IFS's analysis confirmed that Mr Brown should continue to meet both his fiscal rules - that the current budget should balance over the business cycle, and that borrowing should be low enough to keep the Government's debt stable.

Carl Emmerson, an economist at the IFS, said the public finances were still sustainable after the Chancellor's latest tax cuts, although with a smaller margin of error, despite the fact that the IFS's forecast for economic growth is lower than the Treasury's prediction of 1 per cent this year.

The rather weaker IFS forecast for GDP does mean, however, that it foresees a rise in the overall tax burden as a share of output, whereas the Treasury is expecting a decrease. In 1999/2000, the tax increases that have raised the tax share since Labour's election were announced in Mr Brown's first two Budgets, not yesterday.

According to the Budget Red Book, the measures announced yesterday cut taxes by £4bn in 1999/2000, £1.4bn in 2000/01 and £3.5bn in 2001/02. Measures announced in previous Budgets raised taxes by £3.7bn in the first year, £5bn in the second and £7.7bn in the third. Higher fuel duties and the cash-flow effect of changes to the payment of corporation tax account for most of

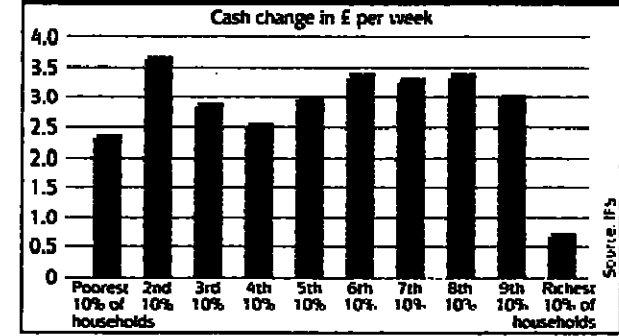
the net increases in the pipeline.

The Chancellor insisted yesterday that he had not made it harder for the Bank of England to cut interest rates further by loosening fiscal policy. "Our fiscal stance is tighter than in November, and that's clearly something the Bank of England will want to look at," he said.

He said the current surplus predicted in the Budget was higher than in November's Pre-Budget Report, amounting to £34bn over the next five years.

However, another analysis from accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers suggested that public sector borrowing could soar to more than £40bn by 2001/02 if the global economy tips into recession. Even a mild UK recession of the type forecast by

DISTRIBUTIONAL IMPACT OF THE BUDGET
Cash change in £ per week



many economists could see the public finances take a turn for the worse. "The Chancellor is taking a calculated gamble on the public finances," said John Hawkesworth at PwC.

Using the growth projections outlined by Mr Brown, PwC calculated that the golden rule - only borrow to invest - will be met and not borrowing will total £7bn in 2001/02. This is rather more than the £1bn forecast by the Treasury. "Even on their own rosy assumptions, the Treasury's projections look a lit-

tle over-optimistic," said Mr Hawkesworth.

If there is a mild recession, and UK growth grinds to a halt this fiscal year, matters look less promising. PwC calculates that net borrowing could top £20bn by 2001/02 and the golden rule will be comprehensively broken. The current Budget - which must balance over the cycle if the rule is met - would be more than £30bn in deficit over the next three fiscal years.

In its global recession scenario, global growth is seriously hit by a slowdown in the US. The impact on public finances could be catastrophic - a borrowing requirement of more than £40bn in 2001/02 alone, and a three-year current budget deficit approaching £50bn.



Numbers game: A little-noticed Budget move allows football clubs to write off the cost of buying a player over the length of his contract rather than in the first year

Treasury footie fans kick off £45m clubs boost

BRITAIN'S FOOTBALL clubs will receive a £45m boost from the Treasury next year as a result of measures in the Budget.

In a little-noticed move slipped into the Budget details on Tuesday, the Chancellor allowed football clubs to phase in a new accounting standard, saving them millions of pounds in extra tax payments.

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

The Chancellor and his officials are seen in Whitehall as being football mad. Mr Brown is a keen Raith Rovers supporter, while his adviser Ed Balls is a Norwich City fan. Geoffrey Robinson, Paymaster-General until he stepped down in December, owns Coventry City FC,

while Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's former spin doctor, supports Tottenham Hotspur.

The Budget measure is designed to help football clubs struggling to introduce a new accounting standard called FRSL0. The standard requires clubs to recognise players on their balance sheets as an intangible asset, and then amort-

ise the cost of the asset over the length of the player's contract.

Until recently, clubs tended not to recognise players as assets on balance sheets as they can lose their value rapidly as a result of injuries.

The rule means that, rather than writing off the cost of buying a player against the first year's profits, clubs have to

spread the cost over the length of the player's contract. This means clubs are more likely to report a profit and therefore pay more tax.

However, the Budget allows clubs to phase in the measure gradually, which means the extra tax burden will not take effect for several years.

According to the Treasury Red Book, the measure will cost the Exchequer £45m in the financial year starting April 2000.

In the following year it will bring an extra £20m into the government's coffers.

The new accounting standard may encourage clubs to develop home-grown talent rather than buy players on big transfer fees.

Firms warn of danger in VAT plans

LONDON'S STATUS as Europe's leading financial centre is under threat from Budget proposals to end the VAT exemption for services supplied to financial companies, leading accountants warned last night.

Marc Welby, VAT partner in the financial services office of Ernst & Young, said Customs & Excise's plan to charge VAT in relation to lending and card operations that banks and other financial institutions outsource to third parties could add hundreds of millions of pounds of costs when such organisations are struggling to compete and overcome the effect of Britain being outside the single European currency.

"What Customs is trying to do is rewrite legislation to undo the effect of court cases," Mr Welby said. He added that, as the proposal appeared to go against European Union law, it was "inevitable that this is going to end up in litigation".

Companies are also angry about plans to combat perceived abuses of VAT groups, which allow companies within a single organisation to make transactions without incurring the tax.

They welcomed the fact that Customs seemed to have accepted claims that big changes in this area would have led to great administrative complexity. "Few issues have excited industry as much as that," said George Michie, UK head of indirect tax at KPMG. Had the measure gone ahead many mo-

bile businesses would have moved overseas, he said.

But tax experts pointed out that the announcement that Customs would in future be able to remove companies from VAT groups where it was felt "necessary for the protection of the revenue" almost amounted to the same thing. Mr Welby said it was likely to create "months, if not years of uncertainty".

Accountants also stressed that, although the decision to impose employers' national insurance on benefits in kind looked like a simple attempt to align income tax and NICs, it amounted to a major change and a significant extra cost.

The Treasury estimates that the move, under which perks such as loans and life insurance would be treated the same way as straight salaries, will raise about £415m in the first year from April 2000, rising to £440m the year after.

However, Mike Kenyon of Ernst & Young's national insurance group said it would create a lot of extra administration for companies, leading many to consider paying employees in cash and leaving them to provide their own benefits.

Maurice Parry-Wingfield, a tax consultant at Deloitte & Touche, said the rise in stamp duty for the third successive year threatened to depress property values and affect loan security.

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Legal Notices

No. 1518 OF 1999
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 26th February 1999 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the share capital of the above-named Company by £1,279,962.15 by cancelling and extinguishing each of the 127,996,216 deferred shares of 1p each and for the confirmation of reduction of the share premium account by £20,201,080.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL on Wednesday the 24th day of March 1999.

ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same upon payment of the regulated charge for the same.

DATED this 6th day of March 1999.

80 Fetter Lane
London EC4A 3DF
Solicitors for the above-named Company.
Tel: 0171 415 6000
Ref: LHM/CMC/WIGG-5

No. 1519 OF 1999
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
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DTI proposes new powers to 'clean up' mortgage selling

BY ANDREW VERITY

THE GOVERNMENT moved a step closer to the regulation of home loans yesterday when it issued a series of proposals to clean up the marketing of mortgages to the public.

Stephen Byers, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, is proposing new powers for the Financial Services Authority to take action against unfair mortgage terms as part of his competition package.

The FSA - until now not expected to supervise mortgage selling in any way - will have powers to take action under Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts regulations, usually the

provenance of the Office of Fair Trading. Further proposals include a single European formula for calculating the annual interest payable on a mortgage, allowing homebuyers to compare mortgages with continental lenders.

"For most people taking out a mortgage is the biggest and most complex financial commitment they make in their lives. It's now a fiercely competitive market, which is good for the housebuyer, but it's important to make sure they are not misled," said Mr Byers.

He also proposes to force lenders to include a "wealth warning" in mortgage advertising. The suggested wording will say: "Your home is at risk if you do not keep up repayments on a mortgage or other loans secured on it."

The proposals follow comments from Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, that she would review the effectiveness of mortgage self-regulation this year. She warned that consumers were unhappy with the method of self-regulation through the voluntary Mortgage Code.

Some lenders welcomed the proposals. Ian Chippendale, chief executive of Direct Line, said: "We want a market where competition is based on quality and cost and is not reliant on trapping consumers into long-term products with unreasonable terms and conditions."

The proposals, subject to consultation over the next year, follow Gordon Brown's Budget announcement of league tables on the cost of savings and pensions products.

The FSA yesterday said it would in June begin a consultation on the league tables, which could be updated monthly or even weekly.

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The Bosman ruling has made players masters of their own destiny and led to a wages explosion. By Nick Harris

IMAGINE THAT Liverpool had qualified for this season's European Cup and fate had transpired to pit them, and not Dynamo Kiev, in the quarter-finals against Real Madrid. Imagine that Gerard Houllier's side had drawn 1-1 last week in the first leg in Madrid and were in the 90th minute of next week's second leg with the score standing at 1-1 on the night and 2-2 on aggregate. Imagine a long ball floating to Steve McManaman, who picks it up on the edge of the box and sees the Real goalkeeper out of position. Imagine McManaman thinking "If I put this in, there ends any hope of Champions' League football for me next season."

Far-fetched though the scenario seems, the chances of it happening in the future are increasing. In January this year it became permissible for the first time for players to enter into pre-contract agreements such as McManaman's when their contracts are due to expire in the coming summer. The number of players, like McManaman, who know six months ahead of a move that they are contracted to join a new team, is also increasing. Welcome to one of the long-term effects of the Bosman ruling.

"That's the sort of nightmare scenario that can happen," Brendan Batson, the deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, said. "I could see that the logical solution in a case like the one above would be for the affected player to be pulled out of the game," Batson added. "But there's no reason he would have to."

A conflict of interests is not the only area where problems may arise. Another, directly related to the Bosman ruling, is the already-present wage spiral among top players. "I think in many respects it [the Bosman ruling] has been a disaster for football," Dennis Roach, a prominent players' agent, said. "Paying a lot of money to players who are out of contract and then paying the same to those in contract is ridiculous."

Roach is no stranger to the effects of Bosman. One player he acts for, Derby County's Paulo Wanchope, is negotiating with his club about a new contract. Wanchope's current deal does not expire until the summer of next year but if a renewal is not agreed he will be a free agent and in a position to sign a pre-contract agreement with a new club in eight months' time.

"Paulo's been offered a new contract and we've been negotiating for nine months already," Roach said. "Derby took a long time to get to the figure that Paulo thinks he's worth. And the love has gone out of it." Derby have now made Wanchope "a very good offer," said Roach, but the player has yet to decide whether to accept.

Is this not a situation of a player holding a club to ransom? "I don't think there's ransom in it," Roach said. "The situation is unfortunately a disaster, but you can't blame the players for that, or their agents for trying to get the best deals for them."

If nothing else, the Bosman ruling has led to a situation where players appear to have great power to influence how much they earn. Several high-profile players who could command transfer fees of £5m or more on the open market and whose contracts expire this summer have stalled on new deals with their current clubs, knowing that if they move to a new club for nothing, that club might be willing to pay more in wages because no fee has been paid.

Aston Villa's goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich, is probably the most high profile of these players in Britain,

while Celtic's Simon Donnelly is another. Everton's Don Hutchison, Southampton's Ken Monkou, Liverpool's Karlheinz Riedle and Norwich's Keith O'Neill, among others, are in the same position.

"What the Bosman ruling has done is to encourage clubs to put players on long contracts and re-negotiate contracts earlier than before and well ahead of their expiry," Dan Jones, an accountant with Deloitte & Touche, said. "Wages are always an emotive subject but players don't hold clubs to ransom any more than any other employee holds their employer to ransom."

David Davies, another agent, said his main concern was not for those at the very top end of the game, but for those less able to dictate their own terms. He represents, among others, a Third Division player earning £150 per week, and Coventry's Sam Shilton, out of contract in the summer and with higher priorities than his bank balance.

"Sam's been on the bench a couple of times this season and wants to go out and play football. A lot of these youngsters just want to go and play football," Davies said. "I think Bosman was very good for the lesser-known players at the bigger clubs, the journeymen and older faces especially, because that guy can now do what he wants when his contract expires."

Davies has no truck with clubs that complain about high wages. "The clubs are their own worst

enemies because they pay so much in the first place. When a manager says 'No, I'm not paying that. Play abroad if you want to, but I'll replace you', then so much the better. The sooner the managers and chairman do that, the sooner we'll see some reality in the wages. In the future I can see players being valued not per week but by performance."

Davies' solution - clubs turning round and telling players they will not pay on demand - may be drawing closer already. One Premiership club secretary, who did not want to be named, said an average top-flight player, "and I mean people who can walk down the street without being recognised," now earns upwards of £300,000 per year. He also said there was a player on his club's books who is out of contract this summer and is asking for a large salary increase. "He's looking for a pot of gold," the secretary said. "But he's definitely leaving us - even if he doesn't know it yet."

Steve McManaman has already found his pot of gold, even if it will not involve playing in the Champions' League with Liverpool, which, in itself, would take some imagining.

PREMIERSHIP PLAYERS AVAILABLE ON FREE TRANSFER IN JUNE					
Arsenal	John Lukic	Leeds	None	Sheffield Wed	Earl Barrett
Aston Villa	Mark Bosnich	Leicester	Kasey Keller	Southampton	Dejan Stefanovic
Blackburn	Withheld information		Pontus Kaamark		Steve Basham
Charlton	Mark Bright		Peggy Arphoad		Ken Monkou
Chelsea	John Barnes	Liverpool	Robert Ullathorne		None
	Dririr Khairine		Karlheinz Riedle		None
	(club would not confirm any others)		Rob Jones		None
Coventry	Willie Boland	Manchester Utd	None		None
	Roland Nilsson	Middlesbrough	Vladimir Klder		None
	Andrew Ducros		Clayton Blackmore		None
	Steve Ogilvie		(on loan at Barnsley)		None
	Robert Kozluk	Newcastle	Stuart Pearce		None
	Don Hutchison	Nottingham Forest	Thierry Bonalair		None
	Craig Short		Scot Gemmill		None
	Dave Watson				None
Derby					None
Everton					None

Committee falls in Derbyshire crisis

Dominic Cork has ended up on the winning side as 18 months of turmoil at a troubled county comes to a head. By Jon Culley

AN EXTRAORDINARY uprising within the traditionally passive ranks of cricket supporters brought about the resignation of an entire county committee yesterday and struck what should be the final blow in a long-running power struggle involving the England all-rounder, Dominic Cork.

The 14-strong body elected to run Derbyshire cricket agreed to step down en bloc after a heavy defeat in a vote of no confidence. The process of putting a new committee in place has already begun, but it is likely to be three months before they convene.

The chairman, Trevor Bowring, announced the decision yesterday after an extraordinary general meeting on Monday night voted 501 to 348 to support the no-confidence motion.

"Having acknowledged the vote by members of the club, the whole committee have agreed to resign en bloc," Bowring's statement read.

Nine days ago, in a final attempt at self-preservation, the committee

performed an about-turn on Cork, the club captain. Having previously refused his demands for greater authority, they handed him a new four-year contract with a guarantee of the captaincy for at least two seasons. At the same time Andy Hayhurst, the club's coaching development manager and one of Cork's main adversaries, left the club "by mutual consent."

But neither development persuaded members to withdraw their no-confidence motion. Indeed, the last 18 months of turmoil have seen the county go through three chairmen, three captains and they are about to appoint a third coach, as well as losing three of their best players.

Matters came to a head in January when Cork, who had been omitted from England's World Cup squad

because of his dispute with the club, threatened to resign the captaincy and quit the county.

Members who had watched as Chris Adams, Devon Malcolm and Kim Barnett left Derbyshire, decided enough was enough and petitioned for Monday's special meeting.

David Griffin, one of those behind the no-confidence vote, said members had become angry at being treated as a "rabble" by a committee with "no respect for our views."

"We knew there was a problem between Cork and the committee," Griffin said. "He had taken the captaincy on the understanding that he had full authority, but his proposals for 1999 were rejected."

"Some of the members who attended a Development Forum at the County Ground last November

asked to be told what the situation was with Cork but the committee refused to discuss it."

Griffin and others then arranged a private meeting of interested members, to which 150 people turned up. The meeting identified Hayhurst, who had previously been first-team coach and director of cricket, and former player Harold Rhodes as having undermined Cork's authority and voted 115-5 for Rhodes "to be invited to resign" from the cricket committee.

"Rhodes refused to go and we were dismissed as rabble rousers who should be ignored," Griffin said. "That was the last straw. There was a groundswell of thorough disenchantment among the members over how the club was being run."

Griffin, a Derbyshire member for

25 years, believes the unrest dates back to the resignation of former captain Dean Jones, the Australian Test batsman who quit mid-season in 1997 after dressing-room rows in which Cork figured prominently.

"There have been certain people on the committee who have been anti-Dominic Cork and anti-Kim Barnett," he said.

The crisis has led to Les Stollman being removed as first-team coach, to be replaced by Hayhurst, and to Barnett being fined £1,500 over public comments he made in response to allegations levelled by Jones.

Hayhurst began last season as director of cricket with Cork as captain, but the two clashed and Hayhurst moved away from the first team to take charge of development midway through the season. However, he retained his place on the cricket committee.

Cork wanted to cut the existing playing staff to make room for new

senior players, but instead the committee renewed all expiring contracts and took on two club cricketers, against Cork's wishes. Cork also wanted Barnett to be appointed first-team coach.

Cork said last October he would resign if Hayhurst and Rhodes were not removed from their positions and promised to go through with his threat in January. Barnett had then been sacked, but Cork's request to be released was refused and he was told he had to see out the remaining four years of his playing contract.

The chairman, Vic Brownnett, at the helm since Mike Horton stepped down in the wake of the Jones crisis, subsequently resigned. Then came this month's volte-face with Cork offered new terms and guaranteed authority. "We saw this for what it was," a cynical attempt at damage limitation."

Griffin said he was "delighted that the no-confidence vote had been a



Cork: Benefited from support

OLAZABAL...
THE EUROPEAN...
Cork, who had been omitted from England's World Cup squad because of his dispute with the club, threatened to resign the captaincy and quit the county.

Lewis fight cannot stop heavyweight decline

IF LENNOX LEWIS and Evander Holyfield are bringing some of the aura of old-time fight nights back to Madison Square Garden this week nobody should get carried away by the notion that boxing is on an upward curve after more than a decade of chaotic, self-serving administration.

Important as it will be to have one heavyweight champion representing the three principal governing bodies for the first time since 1962 when Riddick Bowe cast the World Boxing Council belt into a garbage can rather than defend it against Lewis, the battered old sport's flagship division is



KEN JONES

in such a parlous state that nobody comes to mind as a credible challenger.

No wonder that Lewis's trainer, Emmanuel Steward, who has worked with more than 20 world champions from

lightweight upwards, believes that his man's appointment with Holyfield in Manhattan on Saturday night will not only be the last great heavyweight occasion this century but for years to come. "I don't see anyone else out there," he said. "Mike Tyson can come back and make money but practically everyone agrees that he's a shot fighter. Henry Akinwande (No 1 in the International Boxing Federation rankings) was thrown out for not putting up a fight against Lennox. Of the younger ones only Michael Grant looks to have real potential and he needs time."

There is also the World Box-

ing Organisation champion, Herbie Hide from Norfolk, who was so easily brushed aside by Bowe six years ago that it might be easier to sell double glazing in the Sahara than get him in with Lewis or Holyfield.

The future, the short future that is, may hinge on a clause in Holyfield's contract that provides for the possibility of a re-match with Lewis should he lose narrowly to the WBC champion.

How different all this is from an era recalled this week by the 27th anniversary of an epic heavyweight contest, the first of three, between Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali at Madison

Square Garden on 8 March 1971. Within a year, and while a re-match was being negotiated, Frazier lost the undisputed title he had successfully defended against Ali when George Foreman knocked him out in Kingston, Jamaica. During that period any number of heavyweights qualified as legitimate challengers: Ken Norton, Mike Weaver, Earnie Shavers, Jerry Quarry, Ron Lyle and Jimmy Young. First pressing his claims as one of Ali's sparring partners, Larry Holmes would come to rank high on the list of post-war heavyweight champions. Throughout boxing's modern

history, from the late Thirties onwards, the passing of one dominant heavyweight champion was invariably followed by the emergence of another. From Joe Louis to Rocky Marciano, from Marciano to Ali, from Ali to Holmes, from Holmes to Tyson.

Veteran boxing writers claim that the resilience of heavyweight boxing is best illustrated by the period between Marciano's retirement in 1955 as the only undefeated champion and Sonny Liston's grim arrival seven years later. "After Marciano quit things were at a pretty low ebb," one said this week. "Who remembers some

of the guys Floyd Patterson took on after beating Archie Moore for the vacant title - Tommy Jackson, Pete Rademacher, Roy Harris, Brian London? Not exactly names to thrill your heart."

It took Patterson's three contests with Ingemar Johansson, each disposing violently of the other before the Swede was again knocked out in March 1961, and his subsequent destruction by Liston to restore interest in the division. And soon, Muhammad Ali would become not only the most exciting heavyweight of all time but the most celebrated figure in sporting history.

There is no more substantial explanation for the present dearth of heavyweight talent than the insidious effect of television money.

"Even ordinary heavyweights now expect to be paid out of all proportion to their ability," a much respected boxing writer, Ed Schuyler of the Associated Press, said this week. "The key to it all now is pay-per-view revenue."

Undisputed is an ideal, not a commercial proposition. The WBC, the WBA and the IBF know how their bread is best buttered. Not by having one popularly acknowledged champion, that's for sure.

Boxing: Experts divided on outcome of world heavyweight unification bout but agree that Briton's power is the key

Bruno believes in power of Lewis

FRANK BRUNO, who was once the chief adversary to Lennox Lewis in the battle to be king of the British heavyweights, yesterday put himself fairly and squarely in the corner of his old arch enemy.

As the majority of the British boxing fraternity backed Lewis to beat Evander Holyfield at Madison Square Garden on Saturday, the former World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Frank Bruno, who lost to Lewis at Cardiff Arms Park in 1993, also favoured Lewis to unify the world championship.

Bruno gave Lewis some problems before being stopped, out on his feet, in the seventh round of his WBC challenge. But the Londoner made it fourth time lucky two years after when he fought Oliver McCall for the same title at Wembley Stadium, gaining a points victory.

And now the retired former world champion has put the differences behind him and says he will be cheering Lewis to victory. "I fancy Lewis very strongly because he's fresher, he's stronger and he's more stylish," Bruno said. "But it'll be a great fight. Evander has the possibility of stopping Lewis if he catches him right and I think that's what he'll try to do."

"Evander's best chance is to keep moving because with Lennox's size he might not be so agile after the first two or three rounds. There is a danger that Lewis will come in too big but I don't believe he'll be 16 stone. I think he'll go for power and Emmanuel Steward and all those around Lennox know the score."

Bruno thinks Holyfield has nothing left to prove - and will go down as one of the greatest heavyweights whether or not he bows out as the undisputed champion of the world. "At the end of the day Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano are the best," Bruno said. "But Evander will be up there as one

BOXING
BY JOHN PHILLIPS
in New York

of the greats. Lewis has got to be up for this fight more than any other. He's a bit too laid-back at times and he's laboured against some of his opponents. But he knows the score against Holyfield and he will be well up for it."

Lloyd Honeyghan, the man who pulled off one of the biggest shocks in British boxing history when he stopped Donald Curry for the undisputed welterweight title, has told Lewis his route to success lies in intimidating Holyfield. Honeyghan smashed his way to a stoppage in seven rounds against a boxer thought to be the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world.

Honeyghan, a promoter and trainer in London, said: "I think Holyfield might have a problem against the bigger men. I was in Vegas when Holyfield was stopped by [Riddick] Bowe and I thought 'that's it, Holyfield's career is over'. But you've got to remember he came back from all that. He's been amazing. So it's basically Holyfield's heart against Lewis's size."

Honeyghan edges towards Lewis, but says questions remain over the Briton because of the quality of fighters he has faced. At the same time, he feels the opposite is true for Holyfield. "Lennox has not been in against too many top-class fighters," he said. "Holyfield won't freeze, but he's had so many wars and they take it out of you. Holyfield always raises himself for the big ones but he might grow old in that ring."

Speed will be all important to the Briton in Saturday's battle, according to Joe Calzaghe, who holds the World Boxing Organisation's super-middleweight crown. "I can see Lennox winning early. But I think he's got to get it over



Britain's world heavyweight champion, Lennox Lewis, has some determined back-up in training from Courtney Shand at Madison Square Garden

Reuters

quickly, because the longer it goes on it's Holyfield's fight," Calzaghe said.

"If that happens, I'd be strongly in favour of Evander because I think Lennox is so big that he will tire. I think it's best if Lennox comes out firing. I think he will have to. Lennox isn't at his best against the smaller guys, so if Holyfield can get under his big right hand and drag him past the first few rounds then I see Holyfield doing well."

"You never know, it's one of those kind of toss-up fights. But at the end of the day no one knows how much Holyfield has got left. He got beaten by Bowe and [Michael] Moorer and then he surprised everyone by beating [Mike] Tyson."

Calzaghe's promoter, Frank Warren, said: "It's certainly a very good fight. I think Lewis suffers by fighting smaller guys, he's never liked fighting them. The type of punches Holyfield throws, hooks and uppercuts, are the ones Lewis doesn't like."

to flag a lot in his last defence against Zeljko Mavrovic, and you can't do that against Evander. He was taking a lot of breathers, dropping his hands, messing about."

Steward, the famed trainer of the Kronk gymnasium, now hoping to inspire Lewis to victory, has been working on the left jab in a bid to improve his chances. He feels that, given the size and strength of his boxer, it should be a devastating weapon. But instead it is often neglected by Lewis, who uses it as a measure for his right hand.

Keeping the jab in storage lets opponents concentrate on avoiding the right and landing their own combinations. And with the number of punches Holyfield is expected to throw, if Lewis does not use his jab he could be in big trouble.

If Lewis decides to use both hands, Holyfield at three inches shorter and some 30 pounds lighter, could find his World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation ti-

ties at risk. Steward is well aware of his fighter's physical assets and his psychological shortcomings, prompting him to admit that he does not know which Lewis will show up.

"Lewis has to come out and at the first opportunity... he's gotta let his missiles fly," said Steward, who also trained Holyfield at one stage.

"Even with [Oliver] McCall... crying, he [Lewis] still wouldn't step up," Steward said, referring to the January 1997 fight against McCall, who effectively had a nervous breakdown in the ring, refused to fight and was disqualified in the fifth round.

But in the fight Lewis was timid, even against an obviously troubled McCall, who had knocked out the Briton in September 1994 to win the WBC title. Surprisingly, Steward is less than adamant that his man will win, but promises: "Even if he loses it's gonna be a war. I do feel if Lennox comes out and fights to his potential, he's too strong for Evander."

HERBIE HIDE yesterday repeated his attack on Lennox Lewis' title fight with Evander Holyfield, saying "to call it a unification is a complete farce".

Holyfield, the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation world champion, and Lewis, who holds the World Boxing Council version of the heavyweight title, meet on Saturday at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Hide will defend his World Boxing Organisation title against Texan Orin Norris at the Royal Albert Hall on 3 April.

"All those people who are looking at New York this week thinking they are seeing the undisputed championship of the world have got it wrong," Hide said.

"I am the WBO champion, so the winner has to fight me somewhere along the line."

"To be honest, to call it a unification is a complete farce."

"When Lennox Lewis first retrieved his belt from the dustbin, he was desperate to unify with Tommy Morrison, then WBO champion, and then later on with Riddick Bowe, for both titles."

"So why is it now he chooses to ignore the belt he once craved for? I can't wait to blow Norris away and then beat Vitali Klitschko, the mandatory challenger, because I can then show the world who's the best."

Hide had previously been lined up to fight Norris in Newcastle last month before doctors advised the Norwich boxer to make a late withdrawal because of a skin condition.

Leading British heavyweight title contender Danny Williams said: "I think Holyfield will win in six, seven or eight rounds. He's been through the wars more than Lennox. He's got more experience. Holyfield's one of the best conditioned fighters around and you've got to fight three minutes of each round with him. Lewis seemed

Hide disputes the undisputed claim

Olazabal's Cup mission

THE EUROPEAN Ryder Cup captain, Mark James, gets the chance to observe at first-hand some of the leading contenders for places in his team at the Turespasa Masters over the Parador Malaga del Golf course this week. The £357,000 tournament has attracted a high-class field, including Darren Clarke, the Order of Merit leader David Howell, and the home trio of Jose Maria Olazabal, Seve Ballesteros and the amateur Sergio Garcia.

James will be particularly keen to check on the progress of Ulsterman Clarke, who has endured an indifferent start to the season. The 30-year-old from Dungannon is still second in the Ryder Cup points table after a strong finish last season but missed the cut in Malaysia and lost in the first round of the Andersen Consulting Match-play at La Costa to Andrew Magee.

Olazabal fared better, reaching the quarter-finals, and he will be hoping local knowledge

GOLF
BY PHIL CASEY
in Malaga

can help him climb the Ryder Cup table from 17th position. "I didn't get any consistency off the tee until the quarter-final against John Huston," said the 1994 Masters champion, who won a Spanish Amateur Championship over the Parador course.

"I hit the ball better that day than any time during the week, I hope I can keep that consistency. That's the most positive thing I can take from the week. Now I just need to put it all together. The course is in much better shape than I heard a month ago, the only problem are the bunkers. They have stones and the sand is very soft, which makes it difficult to control the ball."

Worries about the bunkers are common, but the local hero and defending champion, Miguel Angel Jimenez, should

have no problems as he chases the £250,000 first prize. The 35-year-old was born and bred in Malaga and will be able to commute the short distance from his house in Benalmadena.

"This will be a fantastic experience," said Jimenez, who won this title last year when it was played at Santa Ponsa. "I live just 10 minutes from the course and I can't wait to defend my title so close to home. My family will be able to come and watch me and it will be nice playing in front of so many local people."

Garcia, the British amateur champion, is also sure to have a large following as the brilliant teenager continues his build-up to next month's US Masters at Augusta. "My game is in quite good shape," he said. "I've been practising the last two days and I've hit the ball quite well. The course set-up is complicated, the greens are hard and difficult to read and you've got to play very, very well all day long if you want to score well."

Haughton wins after long fight

COLIN HAUGHTON, of Manchester, led the way at the Coventry Yonex All England Championships in Birmingham yesterday with a 12-15, 15-3, 15-4 win over a qualifier, Shyam Gupta of India. The 26-year-old England No 2 and standard-bearer in the absence of the men's and women's No 1s, Darren Hall and Julia Mann, overcame a shaky start to go through in 74 minutes, the longest match of the opening session.

Haughton's Lancashire team-mate Michael Edge put up a gritty display but went out 17-14, 15-5 against the Commonwealth champion and No 9 seed, Wong Chong Han.

The top Indonesians got off to a flying start on the opening day. The men's third seed, Budi Santoso, swept past Canada's Michael Beres 15-7, 15-8, Hendrawan beat Finland's Alexander Book 15-7, 15-12 and Indra

Wijaya beat the Norwegian Jim Romy Andersen 17-16, 15-5.

In the absence of some top names from China, Denmark and Malaysia, Indonesia appear to have a fighting chance of winning the men's singles title for the first time since 1994.

The tournament, celebrating its centenary year, suffered a succession of blows earlier in the week after withdrawals through injury or illness, which included the defending champion and favourite Sun Jun of China, the world champion Peter Rasmussen of Denmark and the leading Malaysians Ong Ewe Hock and Yang Hock Kin.

The Commonwealth champion, Kelly Morgan of Cardiff, had a walkover into the second round of the women's event along with Ireland's Sonya McGinn and Yorkshire's Justine Willmott.

SNOW REPORTS in association with WorldCover Direct

SKI HOTLINE	Resort	Area	Comment	Slopes (cm)	Last	Temp	Forecast	
				Lwr	Upr	snow		
Detailed independent snow and weather reports from 180 resorts	ANDORRA	Arcaills	95%	Fresh snow	110	190	7.3	-5C Light snow
	AUSTRIA	Flatsberg	100%	Groomed powder	50	200	7.3	2C Mainly fine
		Kaprun	95%	500cm on glacier	100	175	7.3	-2C Dry/milder
	BULGARIA	Pamporovo	100%	Good skiing	55	135	23.2	3C Sunny/mild
	CANADA	Whistler	100%	Deep powder	180	430	3.3	-5C Snow showers
	FRANCE	Courmayeur	95%	Good skiing	110	200	7.3	-1C Changeable
		Les Arcs	95%	Great skiing	195	340	7.3	-4C Changeable
	ITALY	Cortina	100%	Mixed on lower runs	70	100	7.3	1C Milder
		Sass d'Ole	75%	Closes fully open	35	60	7.3	-1C Settled
	SCOTLAND	Nevis Range	100%	Wide snow cover	35	55	6.3	-3C Dry/bright
SWITZERLAND	Davos	100%	Great skiing	175	310	65.3	-3C Changeable	
UNITED STATES	Sugarloaf	90%	Loose granular snow	65	150	8.3	-4C Cloudy	

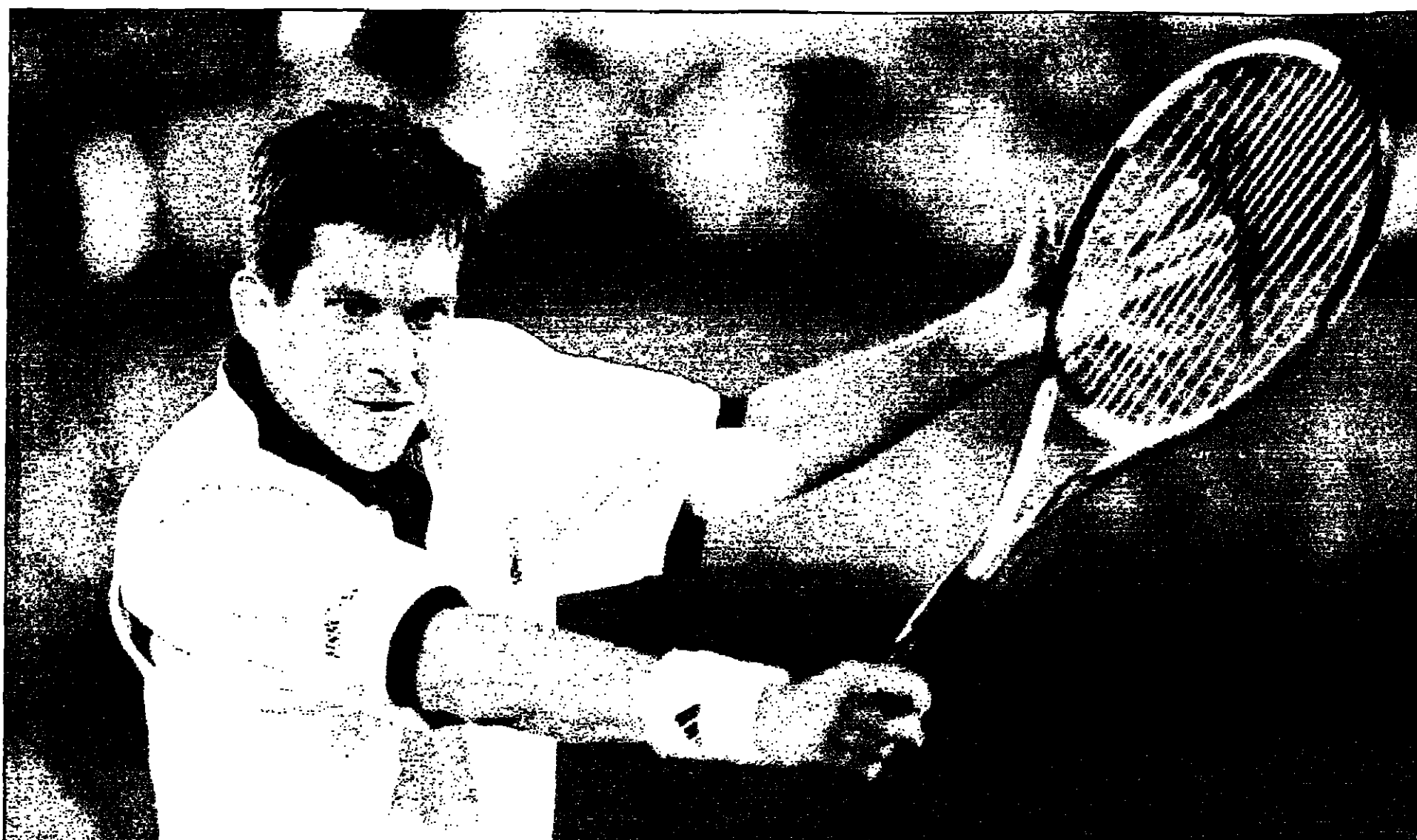
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Britain's Tim Henman was in no mood to let his concentration falter against the talented Moroccan Hicham Arazi in the Newsweek Champions Cup

Allsport

Henman advances in style

TIM HENMAN remained on course for a third-round showdown with Greg Rusedski after cruising to victory in the Newsweek Champions Cup here.

After a tentative start, Henman eased past the talented Moroccan Hicham Arazi with a 6-3, 6-3 second-round win on the Stadium Court in the night match on Tuesday.

The seventh seed will now face his 10th-seeded compatriot if Rusedski can beat Australia's Scott Draper in his second-round match, which was scheduled for late yesterday. Henman's only real crisis came when he was 15-40 down

TENNIS

BY DERRICK WHYTE
in Indian Wells, California

in the sixth game of the first set.

But his left-handed opponent then showed his a frail temperament, sending three tame backhands into the net. Henman believed that his awkward start against Arazi was because of the timing of the game.

"Playing my first match at night is pretty difficult, but it's a pretty good start," he said.

Earlier in the evening Yevgeny Kafelnikov's bid to topple Pete Sampras as the world No 1 ground to a halt as the Aus-

tralian Open champion lost his opening match. The second-seeded Russian let slip a 3-1 lead in the third set as the unseeded Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten battled back to a 0-6, 7-6, 6-3 second-round victory.

World No 5 Pat Rafter, another of the players breathing down Sampras's neck, also bowed out, losing in three sets to the 33rd-ranked German Nicolas Pietrangeli 7-6, 3-6, 7-5.

Kafelnikov and Rafter were among four players who had a chance to grab the number one ranking from the American this week. Now only the third-seeded Alex Corretja and the fourth-seeded Carlos Moya,

both of Spain, remain. A dejected Kafelnikov said: "I can't really explain what happened. I just lost the focus for a little while. Don't get me wrong. I was trying as hard as I could. There's not many times you get a chance to become number one in the world."

In the women's event, the fourth-seeded Jana Novotna, fifth-seeded Steffi Graf, sixth-seeded Mary Pierce and Serena Williams all lived up to expectations on Tuesday, winning third-round matches convincingly.

Pierce won 6-1, 6-0 match against Rita Grande of Italy. Williams, coming off her first

tournament victory in Paris, had a 6-0, 7-5 victory against Cara Black of Zimbabwe.

The quarter-final pairings for the women are the top-seeded Martina Hingis of Switzerland against the unseeded Chanda Rubin of the United States, 12th seed Sandrine Testud, of France, against the unseeded Henrieta Nagyova of Slovakia. Pierce against Williams, and Novotna against Graf.

Novotna, the reigning Wimbledon champion, making her first appearance at this event since 1990, reached the quarter-finals with a confident 6-1, 6-4 win over the American Brie Rippner. Novotna needed only an hour to

dispatch the 81st-ranked Rippner. Graf, twice champion here, was even quicker taking only 58 minutes to whip Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-0, 6-1.

Novotna was anticipating an interesting quarter-final against Graf, a player she has lost to 28 times out of the 32 times they have met. The last time Novotna beat Graf was when she led 6-4 in a final match at the Philadelphia tournament in 1996 when Graf retired from the match.

The last time she beat Graf in a match that finished properly was at the 1992 Virginia Slims of Chicago.

Results, Digest, page 27

Wilson to take Mols for £2.5m

FOOTBALL

BY ALAN NIXON

THE DUTCH striker Michael Mols arrived for talks with Sheffield Wednesday yesterday, and is primed for a £2.5m move to Yorkshire. Mols met the Wednesday manager, Danny Wilson, after a fee was agreed with his club, Utrecht, and the Owls expect to confirm the transfer today.

The prolific forward has been Wilson's priority signing for months, although he has faced opposition from Ajax for his signature. However, Mols' decision to travel to Hillsborough is seen as a promising development by Wednesday.

Wilson wants Mols in the side immediately and he could make his debut against Leeds on Saturday if the formalities are completed.

The West Ham manager, Harry Redknapp, is similarly seeking to enhance his strike force, but from further afield. Redknapp has stepped in for the Paraguayan striker Miguel Dominguez, after Middlesbrough stalled on signing him.

The 19-year-old played for the Hammers' reserves yesterday and could join on loan for the rest of the season in a precursor to a permanent move. Dominguez can come to England on a short-term contract as he has an EU passport and so does not need a work permit.

John Gregory will make a decision later this month on whether Stan Collymore should be allowed to stay away from Aston Villa until he has recovered from clinical depression.

The £7m striker is having treatment at a psychiatric hospital three days a week and spending two days with Villa. But it may be that he will be left to concentrate fully on his treatment until he has recovered.

Gregory, the Villa manager, said: "I have told him that I am quite willing to see how he copes for the next fortnight. It is a unique situation."

"I have to make the decision whether we continue as we are, where he is only making a bit-part performance, or decide to have him full-time at the club. That would mean not seeing him at the training ground at all."

"Then it is down to the money men to deal with the financial commitments that Aston Villa have to the player. The board and myself as well as Stan and his representatives have to come up with a solution in the forthcoming weeks."

Gregory added: "Stan has to receive the treatment. He has the rest of his life to cope with and we are helping him in that direction as much as we can."

Stan Ternent has refused to resign as manager of Burnley, but faces the sack in the next 48 hours. Ternent met the club chairman, Barry Kilby, yesterday after a record 6-0 home defeat by Manchester City, but insisted he will not resign.

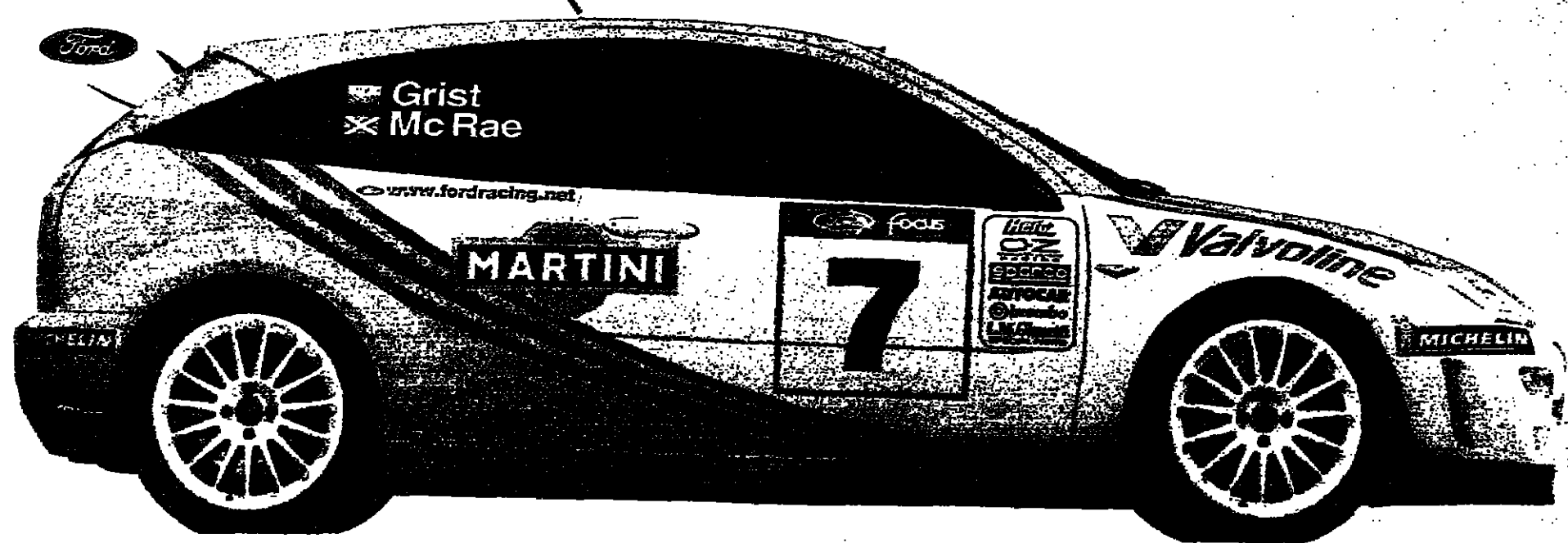
He has more than two years left on his contract and would want a pay-off. The board were in discussions about his future last night and are likely to dismiss him before making a quick approach for a replacement.

England's Under-18s put eight goals past their Andorra counterparts for no reply in Spain yesterday. The England juniors outclassed their inexperienced European Championship group opponents, who had no answer to the skill and physical stature of David Platt's side.

The victory kept England, who drew their opening match 1-1 with Spain on Monday, on course to qualify for next month's two-legged intermediary round. England will complete their group programme against Israel tomorrow at the same time as Spain face Andorra.

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the new ford focus



the seven organizing publications of the "Car Of The Year 1999" award are: Autocar, Autocar magazine, Autopilot, Motor, Autovisie

John Miles 1550

on to
Mols
2.5m

Wenger puts his faith in new boys

FOOTBALL
BY ALAN NIXON

"I have to make the decision whether we continue as we are, where he is only making a bit of improvement, or decide to have him full time at the club. That would mean not seeing him at the training ground at all."

Then it is down to the money men to deal with the financial commitments that Arsenal have to the player. The board and myself as well as Stan and his representatives have to come up with a solution in the forthcoming weeks."

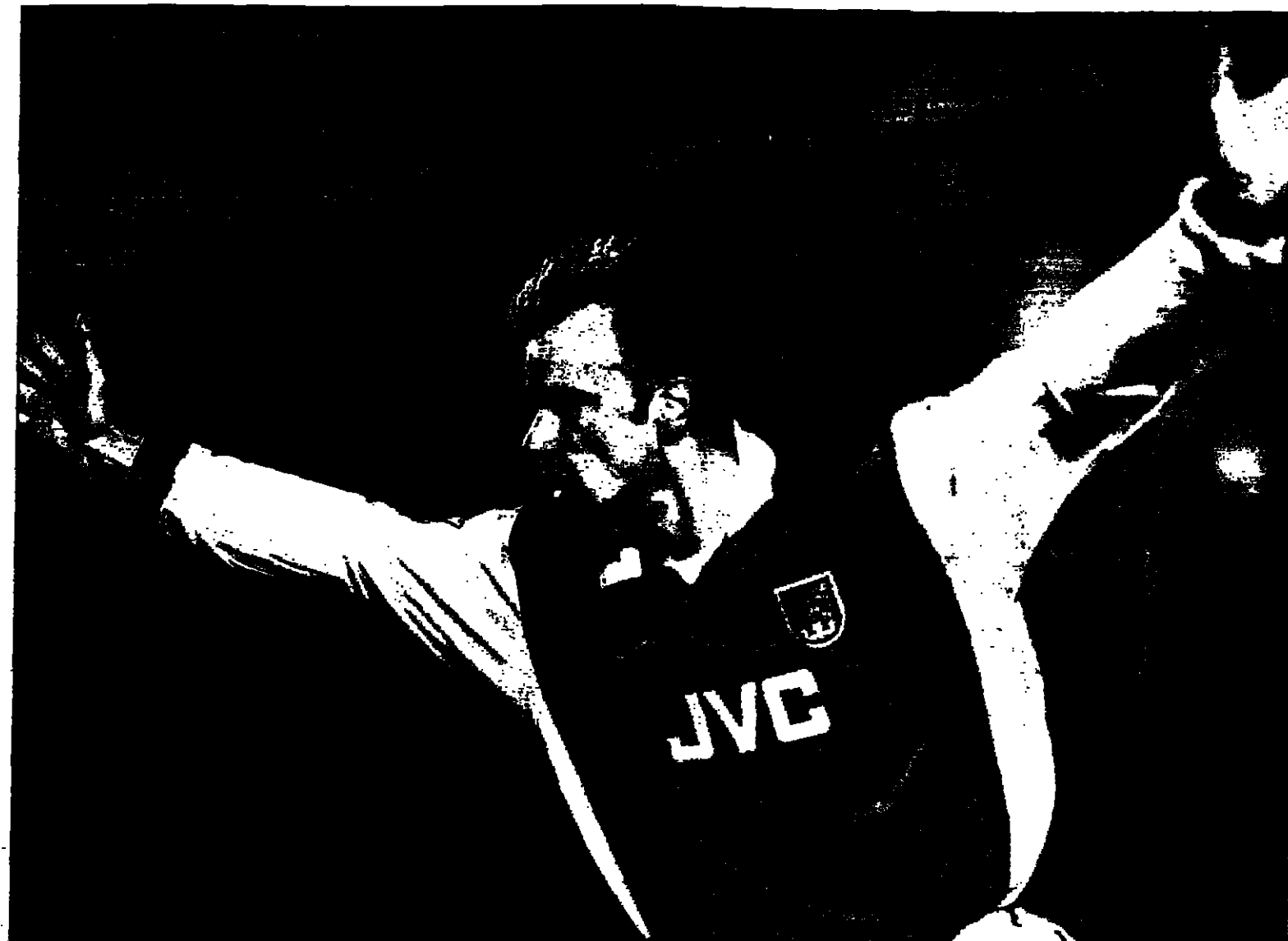
Gregory added: "Stan has to receive the treatment. He has the rest of his life to cope with and we are helping him in that direction as much as we can."

Stan Vincent has refused to resign as manager of Burnley but faces the sack in the next 48 hours. Vincent met the club chairman, Barry Hearn, yesterday after a record 60 home defeat by Manchester City which he will not resign.

He has more than two years left on his contract and would want a pay-off. The board was in discussion about his future last night and are likely to discuss him before making a decision on a replacement.

■ Hearn's £1 million fee for the 31-year-old Spaniard, who has been a failure in the Premier League, has been paid. Hearn has been criticised for his decision to sign Vincent, who has been a failure in the Premier League, has been paid.

■ Hearn's £1 million fee for the 31-year-old Spaniard, who has been a failure in the Premier League, has been paid.



Dennis Bergkamp: Epitomises the ice-cool determination to succeed that makes title-chasing Arsenal so formidable

Reuters

would not surrender the Double without fierce resistance. As Bergkamp spoke of the side's in-built belief that they could handle any pressure, Wenger shed light on the never-say-die attitude which underpins his side's challenge. As new arrivals - such as Kanu and Diawara this season, and Petit and Patrick Vieira before them - have come to Highbury, they have all been caught up in the pursuit of success.

"It's infectious. There is a pressure from the players within to do well. For us it is important to do what we enjoy well and when you come from outside and feel that, it's easier because there is a positive feeling about the game," Wenger said.

Despite his experience, Wenger has never managed a side which has so much character and consistency. He insists that Manchester United are the title favourites but he declared of his own side: "They never know when they're beaten and refuse to give up. There are a lot of great characters in the team. You are a winner or not and if you are a winner it's important for you to win throughout your whole life. They try to give everything to win and as long as they have a chance, they fight for it. If players like (Tony) Adams or Petit,

emerged as the match-winner. "Like the game against Derby, we didn't feel any pressure towards the end. We knew that we were the better side in those two games," insisted the Dutchman. "You just have to keep going and hopefully the ball will go in. After all, you have 90 minutes to score."

Bergkamp and Wenger both realise that the early return from injury of Petit boosted the side and Arsenal now have an almost completely fit squad, with the exception of Stephen Hughes and Kemi Garde.

With no European involvement to handicap them they now lie second in the Premiership, poised to strike and determined to do so.

Wages 'threaten ruin' of leading clubs

FOOTBALL CLUBS ARE FACING financial ruin if players' salaries continue to escalate, according to William Davies, football analyst with stockbrokers Capel-Cure Sharp, who claim most clubs cannot sustain the rapid growth in wages.

The latest figures reveal that the total wage bill in the Premiership and Football League for 1998-97 was £261m, which was 25 per cent higher than the previous season.

There were 70 Premiership

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Full-time referees on cards Thomas is fighting fit

LUB CHAIRMAN will decide whether to introduce full-time referees to the Premiership next season.

The move is being recommended by a working party of club representatives and the Premier League's own referees' officer Philip Don.

If the 20 Premiership chairmen give the go-ahead then a dot scheme would take place on next season. This would involve the nine leading Premiership referees currently on the list being offered the chance to give up their day jobs and be paid for concentrating solely on refereeing at the highest level.

Graham Poll has already indicated that a majority of the 'cup of nine' would be in favour, given the difficulty of combining a profession with

their commitment to high standards of refereeing.

The working party of Don, David Pleat, the Tottenham director of football, Graham Mackrell, the Sheffield Wednesday club secretary, and Everton's club secretary, Michael Dunford, have considered the change.

At today's meeting, they will point to the fact that full-time referees would be likely to improve standards and to be better prepared to deal with the growing pressures in the game.

Full-time officials would also be able to spend time training and developing other referees, as well as building closer links with clubs, players and managers.

Some chairmen may feel that the move could lead to a

two-tier system of full-time and part-time referees, and would be keen to investigate the cost which would be involved.

Leading referees, such as David Elleray, a teacher at Harrow, may be unwilling to give up their professional careers unless a long-term refereeing contract is on offer.

However, Poll has said that his willingness to take such a supposed gamble "underlines how confident we are that, given the chance, we could make full-time refereeing work and benefit football."

If the move is approved and the pilot scheme proves a success, it is likely that it would be extended to introduce more full-time officials.

Another working party due to report back to the club chair-

men is the one which has been set up to examine the contracts awarded to the former BSkyB executives Sam Chisholm and David Chance.

There have been some calls for Peter Leaver, the Premier League chief executive, to resign over his decision to award them lucrative contracts to conduct future TV rights negotiations without properly consulting the clubs in advance.

The working party have met with Chisholm and Chance this week with a view to renegotiating the deal offered to them but early indications were that it would be unlikely that a final vote would be taken on the issue or on Leaver's future at the meeting as further discussions between the two men and the working party are planned.

Amoruso seeking long deal at Ibrox

BY SIMON STONE

THE RANGERS captain, Lorenzo Amoruso, is ready to commit himself to Ibrox for the rest of his career. After turning terrace-jerks to cheers, the Italian defender, who scored the winner in the 2-1 victory over Falkirk on Sunday, is hoping for the opportunity to match the achievements of the great Rangers legends.

"I have three more years on my contract and I have no problem staying here at Rangers after that," he said. "If the chairman asks me to extend my contract then I would say 'yes'. I could stay here for the rest of my career because I want to see Rangers winning everything in Scotland and in Europe as well."

John Greig, Richard Gough and Terry Butcher all achieved immortality in the famous blue shirt by captaining Rangers to past glories. Now, Amoruso stands on the threshold of skipping the club to a domestic treble in only his second season in Glasgow.

"It would be great to compare myself to them years down the line and the best start would be to win all three trophies this year," he said.

Celtic were also given a boost yesterday when Morten Wieghorst made clear his willingness to pledge his future to the Parkhead club after taking part in his first match in seven months.

The Danish international, who has been out of action with a serious knee injury sustained in a pre-season meeting with Kilmarnock at Rugby Park, made a tentative 30-minute return to action as an over-age player for the under-21s in a 3-1 defeat to Hearts on Tuesday.

Wieghorst said: "There was a little flutter of the stomach before the start, because seven and a half months is the longest I have been out. You can build fitness in training exercises, but playing a match is a different matter, and it was great to be involved again. Afterwards there was a sense of relief, but I'm already looking to play more than 30 minutes in the next game and take it from there."

"I am hoping I can play in the League run-in and the Scottish Cup this term and I am going to work in a bid to make that happen for me."

Wieghorst, who is out of contract at the end of the season having only signed a one-year deal, said: "My preferred option is to stay at Celtic Park. I wanted to stay part of things after we won the title, but because of the injury that has not been possible. My representatives have had a couple of meetings with Celtic and they are still discussing the details."

"I only signed a one-year contract last summer but as regards the length of deal this time, I am open to anything. What happened last time was that negotiations were dragging on for so long that we just decided to sign for a year which I was happy with at the time."

Wieghorst's injury setbacks mean he has been unable to impress the Celtic head coach, Dr Jozef Venglos, who only took over from Wim Jansen last summer.

FOOTBALL RESULTS

YESTERDAY

REPLACEMENT CHAMPIONSHIP

Cambridge 1, Ipswich 0 (R. Sp.)

WYTHAM LEAGUE Third Division: 1. Weymouth 2, Poole 1. Fourth Division: 1. Weymouth 2, Poole 1.

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TODAY'S NUMBER

333,333

He pounds per game
Georgi Kinkladze
has cost Ajax.
He has played only 15
times in eight months
since signing from
Manchester City.

SPORTING DIGEST

BASEBALL

YESTERDAY

REPLACEMENT CHAMPIONSHIP

Cambridge 1, Ipswich 0 (R. Sp.)

WYTHAM LEAGUE Third Division: 1. Weymouth 2, Poole 1. Fourth Division: 1. Weymouth 2, Poole 1.

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SPORT

BRUNO BACKING FOR LEWIS P23 • BOSMAN UNITED FC P22

Charlton in appeal for bid backing

SIR BOBBY CHARLTON yesterday called upon Europe to back England's bid to host the World Cup finals in 2006 or risk losing the chance of staging the event for many years to come.

Charlton, who helped England win the tournament in 1966, was invited to address the European parliament yesterday and said: "More and more countries want to stage the World Cup and if Europe does not get the 2006 finals, as Europeans, we can expect even tougher competition in 2010 and 2014. That is why it is crucial for Europe to secure the tournament in 2006 and to do that Europe must get behind the strongest bid."

"That should be the bid which can draw support from all around the world. I believe, without question, that bid is England's," added Charlton, a senior bid official. Germany is the other European country bidding for the finals.

There is exactly one year to go before the executive committee of Fifa, football's world governing body, decide the host venue for the 2006 finals. Charlton told MEPs that even Franz Beckenbauer, leader of the German bid, believes England are ahead in the race.

"As you all know, my old friend and rival on the football field, Franz Beckenbauer, is leading Germany's bid," he said. "In many of the close encounters between our two countries over the years it has sometimes been difficult to keep the score."

"I think perhaps Franz might have overlooked the fact Germany last staged the World Cup eight years after England. If it's Europe's turn in 2006, then it must be England's turn."

A crucial aspect of England's bid is a rebuilt Wembley Stadium which would host the

FOOTBALL

BY KIERAN DALY

final in 2006, as it did in 1966.

The rebuilding will go ahead in time to form part of the bid only if the owners of the stadium approve its sale to the English National Stadium Trust at a shareholders' meeting today. The trust is a joint venture between the English Football Association and the Sports Council.

The World Cup 2006 campaign have urged the Wembley plc board to end any speculation over the future of the national stadium when they convene to vote on the FA-backed bid.

There are fears that unless the FA buy the stadium, England's hopes of hosting the tournament would be ruined.

However, campaign director Alec McGivan remains confident that the Wembley shareholders will accept the FA buy-out. "We are obviously hoping that the deal goes through tomorrow. It will be enormously helpful for the uncertainty to end," McGivan said. "The new Wembley will be the finest stadium in the world and a key element in our bid to bring the World Cup to England in 2006."

Fifa's executive committee meets in Zurich today in a bid to find a solution that would end an Asian threat to boycott the finals of the 2002 World Cup. The 24-man committee have been given until tomorrow to find an extra place for an Asian team in the next World Cup.

The Asian Football Confederation delivered their ultimatum last December after Fifa announced that there would be only four Asian teams in the finals to be hosted by South Korea and Japan.

In February, a six-man AFC

delegation that included the Fifa vice-president, Chung Mong-Joon of South Korea, met with the Fifa president, Sepp Blatter, to push their case.

The AFC general secretary, Peter Velappan, said: "We have a very reasonable request. All we are asking for is half a place. Now it is up to Fifa to do a deal."

Fifa's planned refereeing revolution that it would conduct trials involving two referees officiating every match in "top leagues" next season was greeted with some enthusiasm yesterday.

The International Board, football's law-making body, approved the idea of a two-referee experiment when it met in Cardiff last month but the move was expected to be tried in just one league.

Among those to welcome the move were clubs in France. "This is something I've wanted for 10 years," the Marseilles coach, Roland Courbis, said. "The introduction of a second referee can only contribute to reducing the number of mistakes."

"That Fifa is concerned with improving the system is already a small step forward."

But not every nation was quite so keen on the idea. The FA was reluctant to comment on the proposals. The Belgian football union chairman, Michel D'Hooghe, said that he had reservations and was more interested in developing technology to help referees.

The German football federation's spokesman, Wolfgang Niersbach, distanced himself from Ribbeck's glowing praise for the idea and said: "Our position is to wait and see what Fifa will decide. We, alone, have nothing to say about this and cannot decide anything."



Michael Thomas (right), the former Liverpool and Arsenal midfielder, comes to blows with his Benfica team-mate Sergei Kandaurov in a training session in Lisbon yesterday despite the efforts of reserve goalkeeper Paulo Lopes to separate them. Report page 27; Photographs

Scottish sponsorship deal is defended

THE SCOTTISH Premier League yesterday offered a fierce rebuke to suggestions that it has sold itself short in agreeing a new sponsorship deal with the Bank of Scotland.

The SPL, which had been without a sponsor since its inception, will in future be known as the Bank of Scotland Scottish Premier League, with £2.25m agreed for the next two years and an option already in place for a £2.5m extension for a further season.

Mitchell said: "There was no anxiety to get this deal done and there was never a concern for me [that] we might find our-

selves without a sponsor. The initial contact for this deal was on day two of the season but it is a complex deal and I don't believe it could have worked out any better for us."

"It is a mistake to talk about this money on its own as we have secured £70m over the next four years with significant broadcast deals. At no stage did we drop our price and we must emphasise this is the most lucrative

deal which has ever come the way of the top division."

According to the SPL's own figures, last season's sponsorship arrangements with Bell's brought the SPL a sum of £850,000 per season, making today's deal a modest increase of £150,000 per term.

This compares poorly with the SPL's fourfold increase in broadcasting revenue, though with the Bank of Scotland there

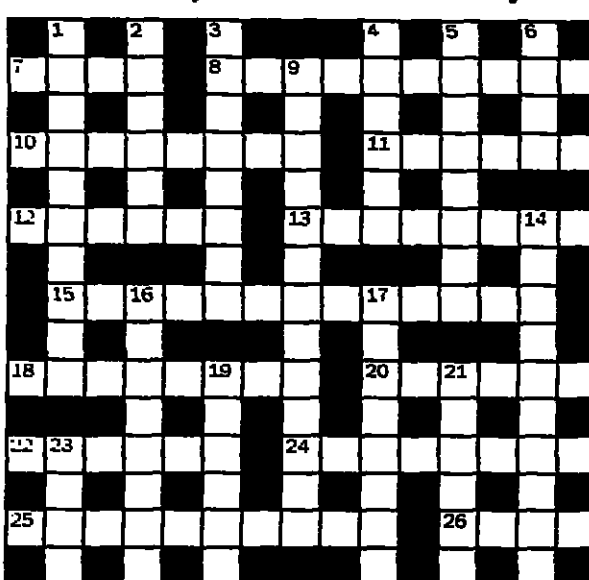
is no requirement to share the money with all 40 Scottish clubs. Even given that, however, the deal will gain around £2,000 a week from the deal, which has prompted scepticism of its real value given the escalating prices of player wages and transfers. George Mitchell, general manager of personal banking at the Bank of Scotland, said: "It is a good deal for us and a tremendous opportunity."

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3867 Thursday 11 March

by Mass

Wednesday's solution



- ACROSS**
- Ruminant animal's half bound (4)
 - Mentions job requirements (10)
 - Note on US songwriter, one contributing to rag (8)
 - Detroit's ultimate hoodlum in the Depression? (6)
 - Opted for cold water, note (6)
 - Not even roughly tuned, say (8)
 - Outstanding novel (13)
 - Laugh! Fresh tea I need (8)
 - Country girl's not all there (6)
 - Rehabilitates (from what we hear) in pens (6)
 - Doctor has to assess wound (8)
- DOWN**
- Disproportionate scary item, grotesque round head of monster (10)
 - Sluggish creature's lapping lake (4)
 - Assembly found in generator? (10)
 - Some crude monstrosities, perhaps (6)
 - Returned, splitting cash for humbug (8)
 - Deserter hauled in by soldiers without charge (6)
 - Brassy bust, but not Vespa's head (8)
 - Floating mass made by British work unit (4)
 - This type's likely to have a ball (7-6)
 - Tribute to a patron's commitment (10)
 - Delusions of reportedly cool cats (8)
 - Good service following in heated icy cafe (8)
 - Consumed not a drop (6)
 - Over a rood (6)
 - Thoughtless impudent bachelor's given the brush-off (4)

Goldberg companies to go into liquidation

BY STEVE BOGGAN

MARK GOLDBERG, the troubled chairman of Crystal Palace, will put seven of his companies into voluntary liquidation tomorrow after they ran up debts of millions of pounds. Although the move is intended to stem his losses, it is bound to fuel speculation that his grip on the club has been fatally weakened.

The entrepreneur is likely to face angry creditors during a series of meetings at the offices of David Rubin & Co, insolvency practitioners, in Finchley, north London, although Goldberg himself is the biggest creditor and he asked us to look at the companies, which we did. Our advice was that the companies are insolvent and they ought to be liquidated. He has taken that advice.

"Mr Goldberg was not running these companies. These were companies financed by him and run by other people and when he discovered that these other people might not have been running these companies

as perhaps he could have run them, he then called us in to see what was going wrong."

"The problem is that with such a lot of money being haemorrhaged in these companies, it is perhaps the explanation as to why he couldn't put the money into Crystal Palace that perhaps it needed."

Asked if the losses were enough to break Goldberg financially, Rubin replied: "No, I don't think so. This is a very busy guy... but he has given us absolutely brilliant co-operation. He has given us all the documentation we would have needed, he has seen us at a moment's notice whenever we needed to see him for background information so we could do our job."

Rubin said his firm had been working closely with the administrators at Crystal Palace, where affairs had crossed over.

Goldberg was not available for comment.

Five face doping charges

RACING

BY JOHN COBB

THE LONG-RUNNING police investigation into race-fixing, which began two years ago after the doping of two odds-on favourites, at last produced charges yesterday when five men were accused of conspiracy to defraud bookmakers and others through "interference with the fair running of horses by administration of a performance-inhibiting drug".

None of the five, Ray Butler, Adam Hodgson, Jason Moore, John Matthews and Glen Gill,

are licensed trainers or jockeys.

Along with the five charged, three jockeys answered bail at Charing Cross police station in London yesterday. Graham Bradley, winner of the 1983 Cheltenham Gold Cup on Bregawn, was re-bailed to return to Charing Cross next month, while Dean Gallagher and Ray

Cochrane, who won the 1988 Derby on Kahyasi, were released without charge.

Fellow jockey Jamie Osborne, who was arrested on 27 January 1998, along with Gallagher but cleared nine months later, said of the release of his weighing-room colleague: "I'm delighted for Dean. I know how difficult it was for me. It must be a huge weight off Dean's shoulders that, quite rightly, he has been cleared."

Racing, page 24

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JP 11/03/99

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Sainsbury must go

Sir: The case for Lord Sainsbury to resign, or be sacked, as Science Minister because of the conflicts between his extensive commercial holdings in biotechnology and plant-breeding companies and his duties to safeguard the public interest in these issues is overwhelming ("Lord Sainsbury in Monsanto talks", 8 March).

Since Friends of the Earth first revealed the extent of Lord Sainsbury's investments last December, the Government has repeatedly defended his impartiality because the holdings sit in a blind trust. When we pointed out that all his investments return to his control once he ceases to be a minister, we were told that Lord Sainsbury "left the room" whenever policy discussions on biotechnology took place.

When we pointed out that he did not leave the room when he chaired a meeting with us and industry representatives on how to hold public consultations on GM foods, we were told that that meeting didn't count - and that Lord Sainsbury never discusses government policy on GM issues with anyone.

When we replied that, as Science Minister, he went to China and Korea last September with Professor Ray Baker, chief executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council (BBSRC) to promote UK biotechnology programmes and secure bilateral agreements, we were told he took no part in such discussions. We pointed out that this visit prepared the way for a Foreign Office sponsored UK-China ministerial meeting this month on genetically modified plants; and anyway, what about a photograph which shows Lord Sainsbury overseeing the signing of a collaborative agreement between the BBSRC and the Korean Institute for Biosciences and Biotechnology?

When we asked to see the agreements and to have confirmed in writing that Lord Sainsbury took no part in any biotechnology discussion, Professor Baker told us "no", because there were no publicly available papers or statements about this trip or the agreements.

When we were told that "to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, Lord Sainsbury takes no interest in the science of GM organisms", we replied that Lord Sainsbury has repeatedly confirmed in public his longstanding, passionate interest in this science.

When we asked about Lord Sainsbury's loan to Diatex, one of his biotechnology companies, which was completed while he was minister, we were told that, as the loan agreement had been settled in the week before he became minister, there could be no possible conflict of interest.

When we continued to call on him to do the decent thing and resign, Lord Sainsbury continued to insist that he had nothing to do with GM food issues in government. Now *The Independent* has revealed that, as minister, he met with Monsanto the US GM crop giant, and discussed GM crops and food.

Tony Blair's ministerial code of conduct is quite clear that not only must conflicts of interest be avoided, they must be seen to be avoided. Lord Sainsbury's position is untenable. He must go.
CHARLES SECRETT
Director
Friends of the Earth
London N1

Right to roam

Sir: The debate about access to open countryside (letters, 10 March) is dogged by the specious argument that the land in question can be fairly compared to a residential garden and that any access to it is therefore an infringement of privacy.

Most of this land is designated for agricultural use, which has a clearly defined legal status and is quite separate from that of a domestic garden. For example, agricultural land is not subject to



National Orchestra Week No 4: The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra's trumpet section do their crosswords during a rehearsal break in London David Rose

the same planning regulation as residential land, so that farmers may erect buildings where they wish without regard to their design or impact on the local environment.

Agricultural land costs about 1 per cent of the price of residential land and, should residential consent be given, the landowner receives the other 99 per cent of the value ("betterment") at the normal rate of tax. Residential land also attracts domestic rates, which are not payable on agricultural land, which attracts subsidies instead.

So if the owner of 1,000 acres of open countryside wants to exclude public access to his property then he should have paid £500m for the land and then about £5m a year in rates. He should also be subject to the same planning constraints as the rest of us.

Owners of large country estates should realise that they do not in fact "own" the land but only the right to occupy and farm it. The Government's latest announcement on access to open countryside is just the beginning.
PETER MARTIN
Tisbury, Gloucestershire

Sir: Anyone interested in wildlife should view the Government's commitment to legislation on "right to roam" with great alarm. Because of intensive agricultural practices over the past 20 years the numbers of many once common birds such as lapwing and snipe have decreased so much that in some English counties they face extinction as breeding birds.

Lowland heaths and upland moors often remain their only breeding areas. The network of existing public footpaths allowed access to these places but also ensured that tracts of land on which these birds could breed were relatively free of disturbance.

No one can condone obstructed footpaths, gully landrills should be dealt with severely and there is a strong case for greatly extending the footpath network. However the right to roam seriously threatens

many of our once commoner breeding birds, which are often the reason why people are out walking.
HUGH BRADSHAW
London EC4

Sir: L W Phillips laments the loss of the wildlife that used to live on his patch (letter, 9 March) and lays the blame on food production. But has he stopped to consider the impact of his own patch? We are told he lives on the outskirts of Bromley, where Kent meets the suburbs of London. How do the outskirts of Bromley compare habitat-wise with what was there before?

The real problem is not chemicals or genes but the loss and the fragmentation of habitat. What wildlife in general, and birdlife in particular, need is for us to grow more of our food on less land. It is an interesting exercise to follow through the implications of that thought for agriculture and land use.
MAX BERAN
Didcot, Oxfordshire

I have carried an organ donor card for more than 20 years and, like Esme M Thompson (letter, 8 March) have been following the debate with interest - and rising incredulity. It has never crossed my mind that the ventilator would be switched off before the retrieval of organs. The whole point of ventilation is to maintain temperature, circulation and oxygenation of organs up to and during the point of removal in order to optimise the chances of a successful transplant. What I find astonishing is that anyone could have thought otherwise. Mrs LINDSAY ATKINSON
Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear

Sir: Yes, we have got rid of the inkwells - thank goodness, what a mess! - But Sue Arnold (comment, 6 March) has got the rest wrong. Ceire, my chalk

Animal testing

Sir: C Ray Greek (Podium, 9 March) appears to be arguing that because testing drugs in animals is not foolproof it is therefore useless, which is absurd.

It is statistically inevitable that occasional adverse effects that were not predicted by animal experiments will occur when drugs are used for the first time in humans, but Greek should address the reverse argument: when tests in animals do result in serious damage or side-effects, especially if these occur in not one but several species, would he then propose that trials in humans should be undertaken anyway? I would be interested to know where he would find informed volunteers willing to participate in such studies, other than in life-threatening or virtually hopeless conditions.

It is more than 35 years since the thalidomide disaster. How many other thalidomides would

there have been in the intervening years if new drugs had not been tested on animals first? I do not know the answer (and I doubt that Greek does either), but I suspect hundreds, if not thousands. However imperfect it may be, animal testing is an essential first line of protection for patients against unforeseen harm caused by the introduction of new drugs, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.
GEORGE HAYCOCK
Professor of Paediatrics
Guy's, King's and St Thomas's
School of Medicine
Guy's Hospital
London SE1

Sir: C Ray Greek misrepresents the history of the thalidomide disaster.

Thalidomide was not tested on pregnant animals before being used in patients. Within six months of the publication of the first clinical report linking phocomelia in babies with maternal ingestion

of thalidomide during pregnancy, this exact phenomenon was reported in experimental studies in rabbits.

If thalidomide was produced as a potential therapy today it would not get through preliminary animal tests now required. The thalidomide story, far from casting doubt on the reliability of animal testing, is an endorsement of it.
Dr JACK BOTTING
London SW16

Maternity takeover

Sir: I read with interest Jeremy Laurence's article "Surgeons still try to cover up errors" (6 March), especially the fact that 350 obstetricians face redundancy because there are too few consultant posts.

May I point out that the statutory duty for maternity care lies with midwives and not with obstetricians and the crisis surrounding maternity services does not lie with the excess supply of obstetricians but rather with the dearth of midwives.

Ever since the management of maternity services was grabbed by obstetricians/gynaecologists there has been a falling off in the service to mothers and a massive increase in obstetric intervention. Recommended standards of care in labour depends on meeting a ratio of mothers to midwives of 35:1 and has nothing to do with the level of obstetricians employed.

The huge over-supply of gynaecologists/obstetricians allows a caesarean section rate which is more than one third in excess of the World Health Organisation standard.

It is about time we stopped listening to the dire warnings of the BMA which is, after all, the lobbying body for doctors, and started listening to what women want from obstetric and gynaecological services.
Mrs SANDRA SIMKIN
Community Health Council
Member
Woking, Surrey

IN BRIEF

monitor, is very good at her job keeping up the stocks and throwing away the ends. However, twice a week, she and the rest of my 30 eight- to nine-year-olds do a mental arithmetic test and every day includes a mental maths activity. And - yes - we still have PE and drama and football sessions after school.
BARBARA LANDES
Brookfield Primary School
London N19

Sir: As a doctor, people often ask me, "Are you a rising star of the Conservative Party?" to which I reply, "I think we'd better double your medication." There is, I believe, a Tory health spokesman who shares my name, but as I am a former Independent columnist I'd hoped that this paper at least

would not confuse our photographs ("Hague looks for team of fresh faces", 10 March). Either you agree to give a gratuitous plug to my astonishing new book *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor* (Metro, £9.99). Or you don't.
Dr PHIL HAMMOND
Bristol

Sir: If the Account brothers really want to be reformed ("No rehousing for Lawrence suspects", 10 March) then maybe they should go down to their local police station and make some confessions, thus availing themselves to one of HM's finer establishments.
GARY CRESSMAN
London W14

Sir: Devotees of political correctness will be pleased to know that Tesco is now selling "sanguine" oranges.
GARY WILLIAMS
London SE16

Out of poverty?

Sir: The Chancellor the Exchequer claims in his budget speech that "With our measures 700,000 children will be taken out of poverty". There are, however, 1.5 million parents with 2.5 million dependent children struggling to live on income support or job seeker's allowance who are left "in poverty".

But how does he know he has got it right for the 700,000 children whose parents have to be in full-time work to take full advantage of the Budget? Neither the Treasury nor the Department of Social Security has undertaken any research into the minimum incomes necessary to sustain essential needs, good health and social cohesion.

There are two points at which he can improve working families' tax credit: the level of income at which tax credits are not granted and the maximum tax credit. Having no measures of adequacy the Treasury does not have enough information to make the decision about what these levels need to be to take anyone "out of poverty".
The Rev PAUL NICOLSON
Chairman
Zacchaeus 2000 Trust
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Feminist men

Sir: Dr Adrian Coyle, a psychologist, wonders what happens when men lay hands on feminine status (letter, 8 March). I can tell him.

Fifty years ago all nurses were women. Today 7 per cent of nurses are men. Yet 48 per cent of top nursing posts are held by men. What does one make of this?

Feminists can scream about a glass ceiling, unfairness to women, a conspiracy theory and so on. Psychologists can argue the male/female roles ad nauseam. To my mind it demonstrates one thing only: the vast majority of women want and need to be dominated by men, and feminists are simply wasting their time.
JENNIFER WORTH SRN SCM
Bozmoor, Hertfordshire

Tories in Europe

Sir: Joe McNamara is confused (letter, March 8). While the centre-right EPP (European People's Party) Group in the European Parliament is indeed more positive towards the single European currency than the British Conservative Party, Conservative MEPs are only "allied members" of the group.

Since we became allied members in 1992, it has been accepted that we can maintain our own party line, especially on issues subject to UK opt-outs negotiated in the Maastricht treaty, ie monetary union and the social chapter).
JOHN CORRIE MEP
Chief Whip, Conservatives in the European Parliament
Strasbourg

Kubrick's pies

Sir: In his admirable obituary of Stanley Kubrick (9 March), James Kirkup refers to "Terry Southern's Dr Strangelove". It is true that Terry is credited with writing the script, but to my knowledge, both Kubrick himself and Peter George, author of *Red Alert*, the novel that was the original source of the film, made significant contributions.

As the publisher of *Red Alert* in 1963, I made several journeys to Shepperton to meet Stanley. While at Shepperton, and waiting outside the huge stage that formed the war-room for a "take" to be completed, I was chatting to the actor Peter Bull, when we both noticed a pile of crates containing custard-pies, destined for the famous throwing scene in the movie. Each of the crates was personally addressed to Stanley Kubrick and the purveyor was none other than Fortnum and Mason. Could it have been anyone else?

ALAN EARNEY
Former Editorial Director, Corgi Books
London W13

Please ignore this message for future generations

THE OTHER day my son was watching a video in which Arnold Schwarzenegger was acting - I use the word loosely - the part of a large, well-armed man who was wreaking terrible vengeance on anyone who happened to be smaller or less well-armed than himself. I thought I should try to share in my son's interests for a moment, so I asked him what the film was about, and what sort of guy Arnold was meant to be.

"He's not a guy at all, Dad. He's a robot." Let no one say that this age is without solutions to problems. We have a problem: too many actors who cannot play human beings convincingly. Solution: let them play robots. And what sort of robot is Arnold meant to be?

"Oh, he's been sent from an age

in the future when all Earth's resources have run out, and he has come back to this time to try to do something about warding off the future, and if you don't keep quiet I'll never find out any more..."

I think I've got that right. As he spoke, Arnold's lip curled and he killed a few bystanders. I wasn't quite sure how Arnold's mayhem would pave the way for a better future, and I wasn't allowed to find out, as my son ushered me from the room at this point so that he could watch it in peace. This was good, because instead of slumping beside my son and gawping at the screen, I was motivated to start thinking about my own duty to posterity. I had been vouchsafed a glimpse of the future, when all our resources will run out, and I still had a chance to do something about it.

Nobody else was going to. The older generation was interested only in Monica Lewinsky and the younger generation didn't seem too concerned about global future. There was my son, 11 years old, watching a film which was specifically designed to alert him to the rundown of the planet, and his only reaction was to want Arnold Schwarzenegger to knock out a few more enemies. But I could still do something about it. In the few years left to me on this earth, I could use my access to the daily newspapers to utter stark warnings ABOUT THE WAY THIS PLANET WAS RUNNING OUT OF RESOURCES UNLESS WE DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

This would have one good effect. It would mean that at some time in the future when mankind finally

realised that our planet was doomed and started travelling back in time to look for solutions, they would come to the end of the 20th century and find my articles preaching against the wanton waste of our civilisation, and they would say: "Well, at least one person saw what was coming. Good old Kingston sent out the right messages. What a prescient, prophetic soul he was. What a shame nobody listened to him!"

What a prescient, prophetic soul he was. What a shame nobody listened to him!



MILES KINGSTON
"What a prescient, prophetic soul he was. What a shame nobody listened to him!"

What a prescient, prophetic soul he was. What a shame nobody listened to him!

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For once, tough words must be matched by action

THE CHANCELLOR and Stephen Byers, trade secretary, have announced a new tough, independent, hard-hitting mergers and competition policy. It could be this Government's most important commercial measure. It could also be the least important.

Most important because, if the Government means what it says, Britain will at last have a fair trade apparatus to match the free trade policy that it has embraced with such enthusiasm in its fiscal and monetary policy.

It could also be the least important policy, because so far we have had a great many words threatening action against restrictive traders and promising ruthlessness of investigation. What we have yet to see is a new apparatus in action that really would reduce prices and put caution into the eyes of would-be monopolists and cartel operators.

That matters, because, in any deregulated market, rules are essential for fair and open competition. What is needed to ensure that they are kept by the players is not so much constant whistle-blowing by the referee, but fear on the part of the players that at any moment they may be sent off.

So far, it has to be said, the Labour Government's record has been far from reassuring. It has embraced, as the Chancellor did again in his Budget speech, the rhetoric of encouraging small businesses and entrepreneurship. But in its relations with business itself the Government seems almost obscenely ready to curry favour with the big battalions, such as, most notably, Rupert Murdoch.

Nor, despite the years of Thatcherite and now Blairite deregulation, can it be said that the British consumer has benefited in terms of lower prices. The cost of too many goods, including cars, food and clothes, remains far higher here than the US and most of continental Europe.

No competition policy can of itself make an economy competitive, and it was quite wrong of Gordon Brown to imply on Tuesday that it could. But it can prevent the worst distortions. The Government's new competition bill, announced last year, should help. Its determination, stated yesterday, to increase by a quarter the resources given to the Office of Fair Trading to investigate cases of alleged unfair pricing and competition, is also a good sign of intention, although hardly overwhelming in impact.

Still more important, potentially, is Stephen Byers' announcement that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (or whatever its replacement is called) will be freed of political control and left to operate mergers policy, as the Bank of England does monetary intervention. Sadly, the legislation will not be introduced until the next parliament.

So far, so good, in principle. Now let us hope that we see some tough action to go with all these tough words, by a Government that claims to have the interests of the consumer at its heart.

A welcome return of realpolitik

PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD Khatami of Iran has gone to Rome to talk to the Italian government about trade links - for which read "oil". After 20 years of Iranophobia in Europe and America, this is a welcome return to diplomatic business as usual. It shows the Iranian government that it isn't excluded from Europe as long as it renounces terror, and shows the Iranian people that there are advantages to strengthening a moderate government. It shows the world that the dangerous phase of Iranian politics is over.

Oil wealth has governed the fluctuations of Iranian politics. Exorbitant oil prices in the Seventies funded the luxury and corruption that disgusted the Shah's opponents.

High oil prices in the Eighties allowed Iran to export its revolution through terrorism, and to wage war against Iraq. The aftermath of the war and the collapse of oil prices in the Nineties have brought Iran to her knees. People are fed up with bread queues and sermons; they want more comfort, and a more secular state. The victory of moderates and women in recent elections shows that Iran sees opposition to the West is neither feasible nor desirable.

With oil prices of \$10 a barrel (in real terms, the same as before 1973), the West can now reappraise its relations with Iran and the whole of the Middle East. It is hypocrisy to divide the region into "bad", terrorist states (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya), and "good", capitalist ones. There's no ethical reason for us to ignore Saudi Arabia's oppression of its Shia minority while we criticise Syria's abuses of human rights. The reactionary, undemocratic monarchies may not be able to afford their pro-Western stance as, with

oil prices low, their people's standard of living falls. This moment also marks an opportunity for the West to become more tolerant of Islam. The West's problem is not fundamentalism itself, but violence. Terrorism against tourists in Egypt is a product more of a lack of education and employment in an overpopulated country, than of doctrinal disputes between Muslims. So Mr Khatami's meeting with the Pope symbolises that there need be no clash of civilisations between Islam and the West. Leaders from both civilisations should co-operate to propagate the compassionate values central to both Christianity and Islam.

The West must throw off its fear of a mythical Islamic threat, and its reliance on force to contain it. Security is best guaranteed by promoting human rights, democracy and economic development. In any case, in an age of satellite television, the mullahs' return to the Middle Ages is doomed from the start. Welcome back, realpolitik.



There's no setting for Hague's Tories at the nation's kitchen table

"ONE DAY," the serious and respected columnist solemnly warned a hubristic post-Budget Labour Party, "the Conservatives will be a credible opposition." And that is, after all, the natural order of things. You lose power, you have a rethink, the government of the day begins to make mistakes, you rise in the polls and, sooner or later (sooner if you're a right-of-centre party), you discover that you are a "credible opposition". Another election, and it will be you exercising all those exciting prerogatives of power: banning foods, meeting pop stars and threatening the Serbs with air strikes.

But what if it ain't so? What if "will" is really "may"? The last time a Liberal prime minister evacuated No 10, perhaps he too thought, "We'll be back", before adjusting his monocle and climbing into the back of the Daimler. Seventy years on, his successors are still waiting. So there is nothing inevitable about political revival, and nothing immutable about two-party alternation. If there were, all the Tories would have to do is wait.

Let us assume, for a moment, that the Tories would regard the 16 years out of power just experienced by Labour as being a disaster of unprecedented magnitude. Since the Second World War, the longest period of opposition the Conservatives have had to endure was from October 1964 to June 1970. The experience of defeat in 1974 was sufficient to provoke a massive ideological re-evaluation; the defeat of the leader in an election, the junking of the post-war consensus and the advent of what later became

DAVID AARONOVITCH
There is nothing inevitable about political revival, and nothing immutable about two-party alternation

England follows Tony. So there are huge problems for anyone who seeks to find an alternative to this updated form of social democracy. The Liberal Democrats, for example, are Third Wayers, differing only in matters of detail - despite Malcolm Bruce's ingenious way with income tax.

In a reformed electoral system, there might be ideological space for a genuinely socially libertarian entity on the right, just as there would be room for an aggressively redistributionist or environmental party on the left. But neither would be able to command sufficient support from the electorate to rule on its own.

This leaves two big possibilities for a party of opposition. The first is to promise to manage the Third Way more effectively than Mr Blair and his lot. The second is a return to a whole-

sale and unashamed advocacy of free-market economics.

But which does Mr Hague favour? His visit to Texas last month did not clarify things; there is not much to be learnt there, except how to ride a rodeo horse. The only great political virtue of the Texas Governor and Republican presidential contender George W Bush is that he is neither Dan Quayle nor Pat Buchanan. The brand of "caring conservatism" that Mr Bush favours is so called because it isn't a prisoner of the Christian right, and doesn't call for gay people to be castrated, or for abortion clinics to be closed down wholesale. It's not of much help when trying to decide whether and how the state should care for the poor.

In Britain, the Daily Mail largely fulfils the role played by the Christian right. And even here, despite its lack of battalions, it seems to prevent any great move by the Tories towards a social liberalism. One moment we are told that the Conservatives are inclusive and compassionate; the next moment we have the knee-jerk extolling of marriage over all other forms of cohabitation.

In addition, where Mr Kimock, say, fought off the far left in order to shift Labour back to the middle ground, William Hague embraces his ultras on the one issue that matters to them: Europe. Even worse has been the association of the Conservative Party with just about every unpopular vested interest in the country, including - this week - the Country Landowners' Association's opposition to a right of access.

This confusion is even worse when you consider the Tory stance on taxation and expenditure. Kitchen-table Toryism speaks softly to teachers, to parents and to health workers. On Monday, Michael Portillo lamented the desertion of the party by public sector workers. "I think one of the things an opposition can do," he said, "is associate itself with the grievances people are bound to have - and, let's face it, there are still teachers worried about conditions and standards in school, and nurses worried about their value and whether they are paid enough."

But six weeks ago Mr Hague stated that "spending [is] higher than it should be, and taxes [are] higher than they should be". How then are disaffected teachers and nurses to have any hope in a resurgent Conservative? And if the answer is that the Tories will indeed be looking to use the power of government to ensure more equitable social outcomes, how is that to be squared with the recent commitment to "set our entrepreneurial spirit free from the dead hand of the state"?

It isn't Mr Hague is stalling because he does not know which strategy he wishes to embrace. No Neil Kinnock has gone before him to lay the path, no Mandelson to crush the gravel. The think-tanks are empty.

At the end of January, in his speech to the Scottish Tories, William Hague concluded with this sentence: "We have started to change the Conservative Party," he said; "now we must make sure we finish it."

Perhaps he will.

ations

AMERICA SHOULD make it clear that we will not tolerate the theft of military secrets. Policy on China has been that "constructive engagement" is the way to combat human rights abuses and help the Chinese enter the world community. But as much as China wants to benefit from trade, its strategic interests are far different from ours. It would be dangerous to put business interests ahead of our security. *Bergen Record*

THE ADMINISTRATION'S chief concern may have been to deflect attention from Clinton-Gore links to Chinese money and agents of Chinese influence during Campaign '96. There's plenty more - none of it flattering to Clinton. Given the administration's reluctance to act, and its seeming unwillingness to share the facts with the nation, it looks as though it is time for Congress to get into the act - not to score political points, but to determine if

national security has been gravely compromised. *Corpus Christi Caller Times*

THIS FITS right in with Clinton's general pattern in foreign policy: denial of inconvenient facts and wishing instead of analyzing. It fits his specific pattern of cozying up to China, source of campaign funds for the Democratic Party. Why is the

administration doing China the favor of trying to "help" it qualify for membership in the World Trade Organization? Favors lead it to conclude it can get what it wants. When history looks back, Clinton's impeachment could be a footnote and his toadying to an embryonic enemy of the United States a flaming mark of shame. *Boston Herald*

SECURITY OCCASIONALLY went on holiday during the

Reagan and Bush years, too. But the Clinton White House seems to have gone one better and lapsed into a Rip Van Winkle-like sleep. By failing to follow up on the theft of information about the miniaturization of nuclear weapons, the administration ignored espionage that has enhanced China's nuclear missile technology to the point of giving Beijing the capacity to launch missiles from under water. *Dallas Morning News*

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"I don't know any more when he is being honest and when he is not."
Monica Lewinsky, on Bill Clinton

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"The words of a dead man are modified in the guts of the living."
WH Auden, English poet

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PANDORA

WE'VE HEARD of advertisers trying to interfere with editorial – those corporate bully-boys Coca-Cola are notorious for it – but never the other way round. Until now. And where else would it happen but in the topsy-turvy world of Associated Newspapers? The *Evening Standard*, not known for blinding out sexy news stories, turns into Miss Prissy pants with potential advertisers. One Night Stand, the celebrity dress rental shop behind Sloane Square, submitted an ad to the newspaper that began: "Got a stiff in the mail..." (In Poshopolis, a "stiff" means an invitation.) The *Standard's* ad rep laughed out loud – but subsequently told One Night Stand that the ad was "too suggestive" to run. Apparently all retail ads must now be passed by the fashion department. The proprietor, Jonathan Harmsworth (pictured), must be thrilled that his highly paid style cops have nothing better to do with their time – or his money.

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY: A Slight and Delicate Creature, the memoirs of Margaret Cook (remember?) was published on 25 January at £20. The Book People, based in St Helier, are offering it today at £1.99.

IT WAS Robin Cook who was tipped for an early bath – but Michael Howard who took it. Howard's abrupt departure to spend more time with his money may not be quite the opportunity William Hague needed to bring fresh young blood to his ragged team. Blue-bench handicappers like the look of the Norman Tebbit wannabe Iain Duncan Smith for the job: he's Eurosceptic, he's brainy, and... he's not the Vulcan-founding John Redwood. But an outside candidate with something of the right about her is moving up smartly on the rails: shrill, francophone Gillian Shephard. The tale spun by her flock is that Howard's abrasive style in the Commons was counter-productive, tending to tip the scales in Cook's favour even when he was under attack. Given that the gnomish Foreign Secretary has been foxed by females in his



private life, the synapse path is that *femme fatale* Shephard could produce identical results across the Dispatch Box.

ALLEZ LES crayons bleus! Apologies almost outnumbered guests at l'Institut Français for the launch of a triumphalist footie tome, France and the World Cup. Was the publisher, Frank Cass, optimistic in expecting Marcel Desailly and Franck Leboeuf to attend? Both were on defensive duty during Chelsea's European Cup Winners' Cup tie that night. Gérard Houllier was another no-show; presumably the Liverpool boss was underwhelmed by the prospect of blocking questions from the floor about Robbie Fowler's Stamford Bridge spat with the Channel Islander Graeme Le Saux. The sports minister, Tony Banks, was watching the Chelsea match, and Glenn Hoddle had retired to contemplate his karma. Let's hope the French team's midfield shows similar precision organisation during Euro 2000.

101 USES for an Old School Tie – No 1. Strangling your lawyer. Harvard Law School has warned the diminutive designer Ralph Lauren off featuring its crest on his ties. What brilliant mind would knock off the trademark of an institution that prides itself on churning out some of the most predatory litigators on the planet? Perhaps Santa Palmer-Tomkinson will be able to tell us in May, when she takes over publicity chores for the designer's new flagship store, near its arch-rival Tommy Hilfiger in London's New Bond Street. Or perhaps Pandora can save her the trouble: Lauren's first job in fashion was working for Rivets, a firm that specialises in manufacturing... old school ties.

FOLLOWING MARTIN Amis's tooth-capping, it seems corrective surgery has become *de rigueur* for our literary stars. Latest to succumb is the former recluse Salman Rushdie, who has had his eyelids lifted. "It's strange, he used to look like Garfield; now he looks like Tony Blair," says one who ran into Rushdie recently. Is this perhaps a homage to the late Stanley Kubrick's completion of *Eyes Wide Shut*? More likely, say literati, he's preparing a new, sexier Salman for the media blitz around his new novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, which features songs that may be set to music by Rushdie's new best friend Bono.

Contact Pandora by e-mail on pandora@independent.co.uk

The harsh truth about feminism



YASMIN ALIBHAI-BROWN
I've seen strong mothers who lived in dreadful poverty but never thought children were a burden

DRIVE ALL the way from Ealing to the British Library to attend the launch party for *The Whole Woman* by the formidable Dr Greer. Even remember to wear the brooch sent with the card, as strictly instructed.

Seeing as the ship has been out and sending up crowd-drawing fireworks for at least a month, "launch" seems an odd way to describe the event. And a desolate scene greets me when I finally get there.

The rep from the PR company, Colman Getty, her hair sorely tested by gales of wind, stands on the steps with a nice, plump lady in the kind of jacket usually worn by paramedics. The party is cancelled, she sorrowfully tells me, and then she asks who I am anyway. They had apparently contacted all the "known" guests.

Howard Jacobson had also turned up, and been turned away after he (allegedly) accused them of getting him all the way over from Australia. I feel hugely better when I hear this. I am at least as unknown as he. The reason for this debacle? The staff of the library are on strike and "Dr Greer felt unable to cross the picket line".

This is what makes the woman so irresistible to me much of the

time. Can you imagine any other writer having the guts and generosity to do such a thing in these political times?

Greer is at her best when she is not simply talking about feminism, and when she incorporates, with immense respect, the world views of other societies and other people's battles. In Sydney, famous Australians have plaques placed on pavements with statements from

each of them. Greer's statement reminds her nation of their continuing barbarity when it comes to the Aborigines.

When the Rushdie crisis exploded, she was one of the few prominent individuals who refused to follow the line put down by fundamentalist liberals. In an extraordinary article in 1994, she attacked the "fashionable pseudo-feminism" which has all too often been a convenient mask for arrogant ethnocentricity.

Ironically, it is that same sisterhood of arrogant feminists (who behave like handmaidens to a goddess in a temple) who have been furious with me in the last week because I dared to say, on *Newsnight*, that *The Female Eunuch* meant nothing to me when I arrived here in the early Seventies.

At Oxford, where I then went to do a postgraduate degree, easily swayed lasses in Laura Ashley dresses and hats with bows were bowled over by the ideas of sexual liberation and the defeminisation of women in that treatise. Myself, I couldn't see the point.

It has been just as intensely irritating to read some of these groupies going on about how we

have all been standing on Greer's shoulders ever since then, and about how wonderful it is that she made it OK for us to sit with our legs wide open.

I had come here from university in Uganda, where African friends of mine had been gang-raped and then been made to watch as their men were tortured and killed by the soldiers of Idi Amin. I had seen strong mothers who lived in dreadful poverty but never thought that their children were a burden in their lives, only their gold.

These are the women, and others such as Asma Jahangir, the head of the Human Rights Commission in Pakistan, and Roxanna Carrillo, the Peruvian feminist, who have taught me what to think, feel and do. There was and still is appalling sexism in Africa and among my own people. But this is bound up with other forms of inequality.

Racism affects our men and boys in the most brutal, murderous ways, which means that we are never free to think only of women's rights. Yet even the internationalist Germaine Greer said in *The Independent* that the definition of a feminist is someone whose loyalty is first and last to other women.

Permit me to blaspheme again, but other ideas expressed by Greer make little sense to me. I love men and in my own life, in spite of some cruelty and betrayals, this love has been reciprocated by my husbands, my son, others in the family and lifelong friends. What am I then to make of statements such as: "All men hate all women some of the time; some men hate all women all of the time; some men hate some women all of the time?"

What Greer has said about how the pressures to look good, stay young and do sex on demand are destroying women and girls is absolutely right, and crucial for us to understand. So how come she admires Madonna, and finds it so easy to lay into another woman writer by deliberately highlighting her physical "imperfections"? (I've never forgotten the phrase "three fat inches of cleavage", which she once directed at a rival newspaper columnist.)

Unfortunately, the robust debates we should be having around these issues have been silenced by deference, surely the worst possible homage to a woman who has spent her life kicking at the very thought of such blind worship.

If this is great art, how can it be reduced to a joke?



PHILIP HENSHER
Gillian Wearing should give thought to the value of an art that's so easily condensed into an advert

THE TROUBLE with a lot of conceptual art, you may say, is that it remains a concept. Although the best conceptual art comes up with ideas or paradoxes that continue to develop richly in the viewer's mind, such as Damien Hirst's dead shark swimming in formaldehyde, a lot of it remains just an idea, without any kind of resonance.

It's often thought that conceptual art is the most rarefied form of art imaginable. But I wonder whether this is really the case; whether most of it, in fact, pursues a blunt and ordinary idea which might make it an art form most appropriate for universal consumption, for distribution to the lowest common denominator of intelligence.

Other highly conceptual art forms, of course, aren't thought of by anyone as being abstruse or inaccessible. Rather than thinking of conceptual art as a branch of philosophy, we might do better to compare one high concept with another; to compare the mass of practitioners with the vicious blandness of Hollywood's "high-concept" movies. Just as you can repeat the idea of this summer's hit comedy in two sentences to all your friends, it's often possible to come out of some SoHo gallery with a neat summary of the fashionable conceptualist of the moment, and in neither case do you feel that very much needs to be omitted in the retelling.

The gorgeous bookshop at the ICA does a roaring trade in postcards of conceptual art, and sometimes, looking at a work of art which reads *I SHOP THEREFORE I AM*, you can't help thinking that the work of art was really always a template for the postcard: that it has found its true level when it is handed over as a greetings card, and under-

stood by both giver and recipient as a joke. First-rate conceptual art remains what it is, and, like all art, somewhat resistant to reproduction; the great mass of it, however, has become an idea, and readily turns into a slogan.

All the same, even if they are not much more than ideas, the works of conceptual artists are their own, and they have a right to make money out of them. You have a bit of sympathy when you read about the artist Gillian Wearing's battles with the advertising industry, which has pretty clearly nabbed ideas from her pieces, and used them to fog cars and satellite television.

The first case occurred about a year ago. Wearing had attracted a good deal of attention with her photo-pieces of strangers in the street, holding up cards on which they had written whatever they wanted to write. As insights into their character, the curiosity was in the gap between their appearance and

what, with reflection, the cards seemed to say about them. It passed the time, a neat idea in an art gallery between more profound or complex work.

Someone at Volkswagen's advertising agency must have seen the idea, and an obvious borrowing from Wearing's idea surfaced in their next campaign, as middle-aged men in pinstriped suits held up placards reading "At weekends my name is Brenda" – that sort of thing.

Anyone who knew Wearing's work would have had no doubt where the idea had come from, and it wasn't a surprise to hear that she was mounting a legal challenge for plagiarism.

And now they're at it again, it seems; there is an advertisement for satellite television which stresses the choice available by having children's voices dubbed on to adults' faces, with the idea that "you never stop wanting to have your own way". This, too, looks perilously close to a piece of Wearing's, and her attack on the campaign looks pretty serious. I can't help thinking, however, that Gillian Wearing is on a bit of a hiding to nothing by going round complaining that her ideas have been stolen by the advertising industry. Of course, it's deplorable that some idle creative can't think up his own ideas, and has to borrow the ideas of other people – and anyone, having seen Wearing's placard piece and the VW campaign, would very readily come to the conclusion that here was, at the very least, a case of direct inspiration.

Advertising, however, has never been a highly original medium. What it does is to steal the sort of ideas that can be packed into a 30-second slot, and tack on a slogan. It hardly matters where these ideas



Are Gillian Wearing's ideas too easy to copy? John Voos

come from, though they all seem to watch exactly the same films – I often think I'll scream if I see just one more advert that tries to sell a car with the last scene of *The Graduate* – and it was really only to be expected that, sooner or later, conceptual art was going to be raided.

You can see, of course, that these adverts do damage Wearing's art, and damage her capacity to pursue her own ideas. The placard piece, for instance, was not originally a joke, or not really; although it sometimes moved towards an ironic humour, it didn't aim primarily to amuse.

The VW advert that it turned into, on the other hand, was nothing but a joke, and it was very striking that after it began to be aired, people started to respond to Wearing's work as if it were meant to make you laugh. Not only is that kind of thing of emotional response pretty damaging, but it also made it difficult for her to carry on with the pro-

ject. Anyone who was subsequently approached in the street and asked to be photographed with their thoughts on a card would generally remark, "Oh, like that car advert", and make an attempt to come up with a joke.

All the same, I think that if I were Gillian Wearing I might give a moment's thought to the value of practising an art that is so easily condensed into 30 seconds of air time and can be so slickly given a neat slogan at the end.

Of course, in the short term the firms concerned ought to pay her for what is an indisputable use of her ideas. But a much more valuable solution would be for conceptual artists to work at levels that cannot be boiled down to the intellectual level of the snake-oil salesman: to produce works of art that are too rich and ambiguous in meaning for any hired mediocrity to snaffle for the benefit of a new chocolate bar.

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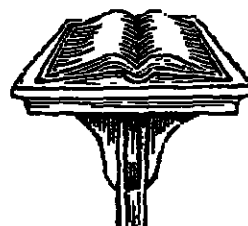
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Hand on the torch of faith



PODIUM

GEORGE CAREY

From the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech to the Anglican Conference on Evangelism, held in the Lake District

WHAT IS the missionary challenge to Anglicans in the next millennium? The answer is: "We must pay increasing attention to culture and mission." But how? My response is that the attention we pay must be prophetic attention.

The importance of this in the developing world has been explored quite thoroughly. Prophecy is about the redemption and transformation of culture. In those countries where injustice from governments both at home and abroad blights people's lives, the call for transformation has featured strongly in the growing volume of the prophetic cries for justice.

Nor do I need to remind you of the books that have been written on these subjects, beginning with those of the liberation theologians of Central and South America. Their theology has given those of us in the developed world a number of useful and valuable insights, but I think many people find it difficult to see how the prophetic prescriptions of such theologians can work in this country as it is now. How do we make our prophetic witness in

the Church of England today? Our culture seems to be one in which it is claimed that Christianity is dying a natural death, literally of "old age". Life is not as dramatic in Britain as it is in Latin America or Central Africa so, perhaps, it doesn't require a Christian revelation to interpret it.

We can certainly be grateful to Christianity for all it has given this country – but its moment has gone. We no longer need its structures, liturgy or life. We no longer feel the need for peace, security or hope in God. We get them from other sources: our wealth, our pleasures, our democracy. Sure, Christian evangelisation works in Africa – but not here. It's no longer necessary in the affluent, self-assured First World. So the argument goes.

But it is precisely because we are in a society with something of an allergy to religion that mission is crucial. A different type of mission it must be, but it is essentially the same task that is being performed so inspiringly in other parts of the world.

If we are to bring people to God, we need a distinctive prophetic witness that engages

with our particular culture. What is more, prophets are rather like parents. They bring a mixture of inspiration and criticism. So too, there is no doubt that we need inspiration and indeed, a bit of self-searching criticism in this country at present. There are some hard things that need to be acknowledged by a prophetic mission. We must be honest about the kind of society we seek to serve at the turn of the

century – a society that includes ourselves. We are a society oppressed, in the main not by lack, but by surfeit: not by strife, but by ease. Of course, there is real poverty in our midst, but most people have benefited enormously from the rises in real incomes over the last few decades. We have gone from "You've never had it so good" to "You never had it too bad".

Few of us remain who can remember the last world war, when we were on our beams. And we have paid a price for such comfort and ease. We are in a situation where the things of ultimate importance are invisible, obscured by the things of transitory glamour. The "love that abides for ever" cannot easily endure in such a culture. The Church says that now, and part of its mission will be to keep on saying it.

And we must be honest that when we do mission, when we try to witness to the God who has called us, we are criticising such a society. The public we seek to evangelise are not stupid. They know that very often, the gospel being preached to them is an implicit criticism of their

way of life. They are not going to like it. But particularly they will not like it if we try to disguise that fact. Or if we try to hide the radical implications of following this Lord. If all we say is: yes, it's obvious you lead a wonderful life, with your two lovely children, your two holidays a year, your two cars, two television sets, two videos, two microwaves, two heated towel rails... but – you also need God in your life, that's all that is missing.

Let us not see the end of this decade as a winding down, a cutting back of those actively involved in mission. Let us see this as the foundation upon which we continue to build. The church is one generation away from extinction.

Our generation is called upon to hand on our torch of faith to the generations of the third millennium. It will require all our vigour, all our energy, all our faith and enthusiasm. And it is God's prophetic mission that we share. It is a concern and a commitment that, I am sure, the new Archbishop's Council will take to heart, as must each bishop and every clergy member.

Canon Bill Vanstone

BILL VANSTONE was the most intellectually brilliant of the many able men who were ordained after the Second World War. He was a 20th-century John Keble who committed himself without compromise to a pastoral ministry as well as writing a number of small spiritual books, hymns and verses. Many had prophesied for him a glittering academic career. Occasionally Vanstone allowed himself a twinkle and would remark: "Seven of my friends have just accepted jobs which I have refused."

He was greatly respected within the ministry of the churches. Both lay and ordained men and women who were lonely, questioning, or deeply wounded found their way to his door and his lights often burned late into the night.

William Hubert Vanstone, the published as WH. Vanstone, was born in 1923 in a Lancashire vicarage, where his father and his mother were model leaders in a working-class parish, wholly devoted to the needs of the parishioners. His parents remained his models throughout his life.

After service in the RAF training as a pilot in Canada, he took two Firsts at Balliol College, Oxford, and afterwards, while training for the ministry at Westcott House, Cambridge, he gained a starred First in the Cambridge tripos. He achieved further distinction while studying under Paul Tillich and James Mullerburg at the General Theological Seminary, New York. His retentive and analytic mind had an unusual grasp both of contemporary philosophy and modern historical methodology. Oxford colleges were eager for his services, but he was determined to be a parish clergyman.

Vanstone was ordained in 1950 and served in the Lancashire parishes of Halliwell and Kirkholme before a heart attack persuaded him in 1978 to accept the post of Canon Residentiary at Chester Cathedral, where he served under Dean Ingram Cleasby, one of the survivors of Arnhem.

At Halliwell and Kirkholme, Vanstone established a strong influence over the boys' clubs and his summer holiday camps in Wales, the Western Isles of Scotland and Ireland became famous. He believed in discipline and regular church attendance. In camp on the Island of Coll, everyone went

to the Wee Frees in the morning and the Church of Scotland in the evening. The previous night Coll had been lashed by fierce gales which were the subject of both sermons; the Wee Frees as an example of the Wrath of God at the sinfulness of the people of Coll, the Church of Scotland - whose minister had nearly perished in the crossing - as a sign that "The Lord is my Shepherd". In discussion with Vanstone, the Lancashire lads in camp found the Church of Scotland hardly not only shorter but much more Christian.

Vanstone's parish friendships were long-lasting and some led to ordination. His parishes were car-

Vanstone left on the characters of those he influenced the impression that they were valued by a God who was prepared to suffer without limit

ing communities with a strong commitment to Sunday worship.

At Chester Cathedral Vanstone could be puzzling to his colleagues. He found teamwork difficult. He loved cathedral worship and his brief eucharistic addresses were exceptional. He insisted on living in a small cottage, not the Canon's large house, and was splendidly accessible. He enjoyed cooking and was endlessly hospitable. But he was averse to any change in worship or administration, though it was a time when both the Church of England and the Second Vatican Council were encouraging lay involvement at many levels. Vanstone felt it his duty to slam on the brakes. He did not allow the Bishop to celebrate the new liturgy more than once a year and then on a weekday. He was in-

genious in devising arguments in favour of "Leave Well Alone".

His genius flowered in his addresses, essays and devotional books. In 1954 he had contributed a perceptive essay on St Paul's exercise of authority in a volume of essays edited by Kenneth Carey, *The Historic Episcopate in the Fullness of the Church*. In 1979 his *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, published two years previously, won the Collins Religious Book Prize. In 1982 *The Stature of Waiting* was welcomed by many as a notable protest against over-activism in the Church and the public relations of religion: it was a plea to see the waiting figure in the Gospels as powerful and dignified. His last book, *Flare Well in Christ* (1987), returned to his emphasis on the suffering but creative love of God for His whole world.

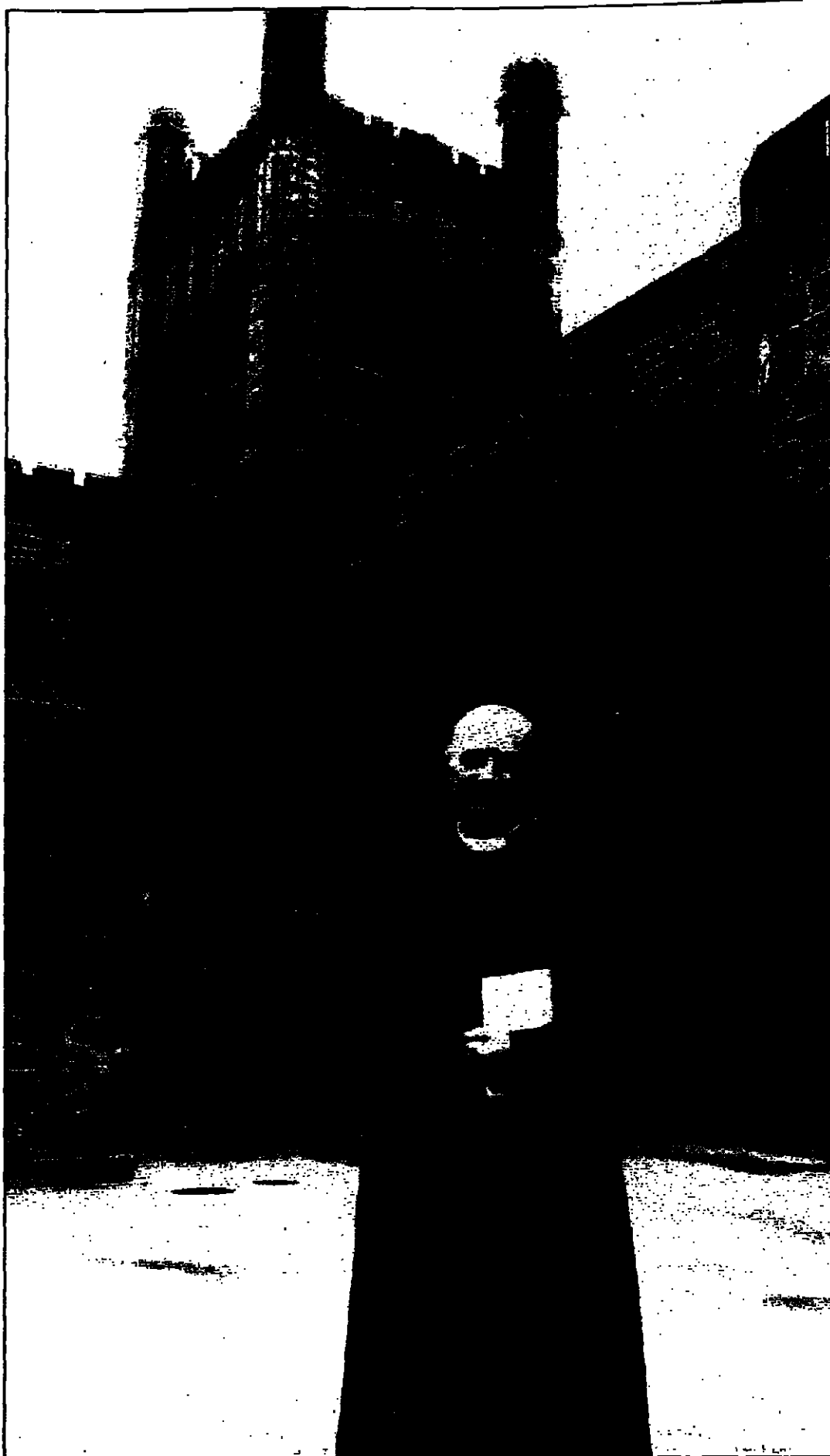
Vanstone was a short, sturdy man with black hair and piercing eyes. He reminded many of the old-fashioned celibate priests of an earlier tradition. He was so busy with all the duties and lists and laughter and agonies of a parish, that he had no time to think of marriage. He never took holidays.

In his later years he did not involve himself in ecumenism or in the struggles over apartheid and justice in Africa. He felt the tide was turning against the Church and that each year its work became more difficult on the housing estates to which he had devoted his life. But he left on the characters of those he influenced the impression that they were valued by a God who was prepared to suffer without limit.

Vanstone argued that humanity can achieve its true dignity through a life of prayer. In his own last years he lived out patiently his theme of waiting.

ALAN WEBSTER

William Hubert Vanstone, priest: born Mossley, Lancashire 9 May 1923; ordained deacon 1950, priest 1951; Curate in charge, Kirkholme 1955-64, Vicar 1964-76; Honorary Canon, Manchester Cathedral 1968-76; Vicar of Hattersley 1977-78; Canon Residentiary, Chester Cathedral 1978-90; Six Preacher, Canterbury Cathedral 1983-91; died Cirencester, Gloucestershire 4 March 1999.



Vanstone: like the old-fashioned celibate priests of an earlier generation

Kathleen Nott

IN EXTREME old age (she lived to be 94), Kathleen Nott, by then severely handicapped by deafness and Parkinson's disease, more than once complained to me that she had been underrated. In this she was right. As novelist, poet, critic and editor, she was a woman of formidable gifts, to which, in her prime, she brought a no less formidable determination and energy. If she failed to achieve the widespread popularity that such gifts deserved, it was undoubtedly because her poetry and novels were so often so cerebral and her critical writings so often so intolerant of the views of others.

I had always assumed that Kathleen Nott had come from the professional classes. I was therefore astonished when, only recently, after many years of friendship, I learned that her father had been a lithographic printer and that her mother had kept the Brixton boarding house that became the setting of her 1960 novel *Private Fires*.

Regarded by everyone in her youth as a bird of paradise in a family of sparrows, she moved effortlessly from state school to King's College London, and then, on an open exhibition, to Somerville College, Oxford. Her original intention had been to read English, but she soon decided that that was not a sufficiently demanding academic discipline and instead opted for PPE.

It was at Oxford that she met Christopher Bailey, the distinguished "boffin" (as she would refer to him, after their divorce, half in admiration and half in derision) whom she would marry, with whom she would escape at the last minute from Holland when the Germans invaded, and whom, soon after the Second World War, she would accompany to Sweden - a country of which she would write brilliantly, albeit with a marked lack of love or enthusiasm, in her 1961 *A Clean, Well-lighted Place*.

It was in 1961 that she achieved her first major success with a contentious and strenuously argued work of philosophy, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, in which, herself an atheist, she took issue with such fashionable Christian propagandists of the time as Graham Greene, T.S. Eliot and C.S. Lewis. She enjoyed all the ensuing controversy, dismissing those who disagreed with her as "rain-compoops" (a favourite word of hers when she felt that people, however eminent, had slipped below her own rigorous intellectual standards).

For many years, from the 1950s onwards, Kathleen Nott was active in Pen, when that organisation was more concerned with literature and less concerned with human rights than it is today. She was therefore the obvious choice to edit for Pen the Unesco-sponsored *Bulletin of Selected Books* (later retitled *Pen International*), a publication designed to increase knowledge of literature written in languages of lesser currency. Unfortunately, during her 27-year editorship, sales remained disappointing, such was her intellectual approach to a task which she carried out with unfaltering dedication for a salary far smaller than her father would have earned as a printer.

In 1974 she was elected President of English Pen. But this office, which at first brought her so much pleasure, eventually brought her chagrin. In the following year Pen began its plans to host an international congress, and reluctantly the executive committee came to the conclusion that Nott lacked the ease and charm of personality essential in anyone whose task it would be to entertain a host of eminent and, in many cases, demanding writers from all over the world. Instead of being re-elected for a further year of office, she was therefore replaced by Stephen Spender. When attempting to enlist my support to oppose his election, she told me: "I am as good a poet as he is and a far better critic." I had not the heart to tell her that, although that might indeed be true, she unfortunately lacked with his charisma and his popularity all over the world.

But if Kathleen Nott lacked those attributes, she was, until her last, increasingly depressing years as a semi-invalid in a nursing home, always stimulating and entertaining company when among friends. Over dinner at the University Women's Club, she would regale me with scandalous anecdotes about other writers, in a voice so loud (like many deaf people she was unaware of its volume) that I was nervous of how much was being overheard. Her jokes were good, if often acerbic, and she had the rare ability to be as much amused by the jokes of others as by her own.

On her retirement from her Pen editorship, I wrote of her as "a poet sadly underrated by those sweet hither and thither on choppy tides of fashion, a prose writer who combines vigour with self-discipline, and a philosopher with a rare gift for exegesis not only of her own ideas but of the ideas of others". I meant every word of that tribute then, and I mean every word of it now.

FRANCIS KING

Kathleen Cecilia Nott, writer: born London 11 February 1905; FRSL 1977; married 1929 Christopher Bailey (marriage dissolved); died Swindon, Wiltshire 20 February 1999.

John Figueroa

NOT EVERYONE appreciates that the West Indian spirit is by no means bound by its geographical limitations. John Figueroa was a sublime example of a spirit which revelled in the enjoyment of many cultures, beyond the boundaries of that chain of small islands which runs from Jamaica down to Trinidad but whose harvest can be counted in the wealth of the contribution which has been made from there to English literature and elsewhere.

Poet, educator, lover of cricket, a man always ready to engage the debate on life and literature, a giant who linked the West Indies with other cultures, other literatures, Figueroa is sometimes remembered as one of the first contributors to that remarkable series which Henry Swanzy produced for BBC radio, *Caribbean Voices*, the programme in which West Indian literary talents first found their voice, in the early 1950s.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1920, Figueroa never lost the interest and the ability to make an incisive comment on local customs - I remember laughing while listening to a comment in a piece he did from



Figueroa: large of life and size

the West Indies for the BBC's *From Our Own Correspondent* in which he spoke of a certain minister who was "off the island". The phrase is a commonplace of West Indian speech; I had never thought about it before, until Figueroa lit upon its curiosity.

Large of life and size as well as vision, he was eminently suited to filling, in 1957, the chair of Professor of Education at the University College of the West Indies, as it then

was, with special relations with London University before attaining full university status in 1962. He was the first West Indian to hold a chair at UCL and brought a breath of Caribbean disregard for the pretensions of the English abroad to common rooms in danger of a debilitating stuffiness.

Never one to be intimidated by language, the study of which was always a particular interest of his, he also extended his contacts with the non-English-speaking Caribbean when he took the post of Professor of English at the University of Puerto Rico. From there he went, as so many West Indians long to do, to Africa, joining the staff of the University of Jos in Nigeria in 1975 where he served as Professor of Education from 1976 to 1979. From Africa he completed the circle of historic connections, coming then to England, where he first set up the programme of Caribbean Studies at Bradford College before joining the Open University (1980-83) and later the Manchester Education Authority as Adviser in Multi-Cultural Education (1983-85).

While living and working in Eng-

land since the 1980s he worked hard to bring to the West Indian diaspora as well as to the native English the importance of Caribbean literature, with contributions to the anthology *African and Caribbean Writing in English* (1982) and a book on the relevance of West Indian literature to people of Caribbean heritage living in Britain, as well as a more recent examination of Jamaican Creole as it exists in the UK.

His considerable record in the teaching of formal studies in education and language should not, however, blind us to his verse. John Figueroa was, above all, a poet and it is for his poetry that we should remember him and for which he would wish to be remembered. In his writing he explored the subtleties of his heritage but also ranged through the classics, displaying a love of literature and history, while constantly returning to his Caribbean, and more particularly Jamaican, reference points.

He was particularly interested in, and wrote about, the work of Derek Walcott, most recently on Walcott's *magnum opus, Omeros*, but he was also always interested in the work

of many other West Indian writers and gave them unstintingly of his support. With his wife, Dorothy, a considerable influence and support throughout his life, he early on produced a book on Caribbean writers (*Caribbean Writers*, 1979) and continued to interact with them in conferences, seminars and anthologies right up until the end.

In *The Chase* (1992), a volume which collected his poems from 1941 to 1989, the title piece is a love poem, but others deal with religion, simple memories such as the "Christmas Breeze" which all Jamaicans know and love, and many other subjects - a piece on Chartres Cathedral is particularly popular.

A keen follower of cricket, he was to be found in the commentator's box at all the important matches, publishing in 1991 a book *West Indies in England: the great post-war tours*.

PAMELA BESHOP

John Joseph Maria Figueroa, poet and educationist: born Kingston, Jamaica 4 August 1920; married Dorothy Alexander (two sons, three daughters); died 5 March 1999.

Epitaph

The old man is gone
Him dead, sah, him dead!
(Where are the frigate birds?)

Absent from Junkanoo Lounge,
Someone will miss him from
The Caribbe Bar - but only long
After.

Him dead, sah, him dead!
In Santiago de los Caballeros
(O Spanish men on horses!)
They will remember when
It is too late how lively he
Could be.

Him dead, sah, se murio.
But Tavern on the Green
Will dance, and Tower Isle
And Myrtle Bank, so stupidly
Demolished.

(Him done dead, sah)
And wherever for a moment or
A night he used to cast the spell
Against death with dancing
A spell that works and does
Not warp.

(Him dead, sah, him dead!)
A spell that did not last.

The frigate birds have soared
away.
The hurricane clouds have left
The skies clean blue,
And in the silence he has danced
Away, away, across the bar.

Him no dead, sah?

from *The Chase*, 1992

Abol Hassan Ebtehaj

ABOL HASSAN EBTEHAJ pioneered the concept of economic planning in Iran. He has been described by Eugene Black, a former president of the World Bank, as "one of the most significant Iranians of the post-World War II period ... an outstanding pioneer in Third World development, a nationalist utterly committed to the promotion of his country's interests".

Ebtehaj was born in 1899 in Rasht, capital of the Caspian province of Gilan, where his father was a well-to-do customs official. When only 11 he was sent with his elder brother for schooling in Paris. Beirut and Tehran and became fluent in French and English.

On his return home in 1918 he was employed for a time as an interpreter with British forces then stationed in Gilan. Chaotic post-war conditions and the murder of his father in 1920 caused his mother to flee

with her family to Tehran where the 20-year-old Ebtehaj joined the staff of the British-owned Imperial Bank of Persia, then the country's principal bank.

There he rose rapidly but resigned in 1936 on realising that there was no chance of him or any other Iranian ever achieving management status. He joined the Ministry of Finance and served in a number of important posts, culminating in the governorship of the Bank Melli (National Bank) from 1942 to 1950. During these years he successfully challenged the supremacy of the Imperial Bank and asserted that of the Bank Melli, which became in all but name the country's central bank.

Quick-tempered and intolerant of interference, corruption and fools, Ebtehaj made enemies and was abruptly dismissed in July 1950. He spent the next four years in virtual

exile, first as ambassador to France, then as director of the IMF's Middle East department in Washington, DC, where the reputation and friends he made were to stand him in good stead when he was recalled to Tehran in 1954 to head his country's Plan Organisation.

There, assisted by able young Western-trained Iranians together with advisers and loans from the World Bank, he launched an impressive development programme of dam and road building, the base for Iran's economic achievements in the 1960s and 1970s. In resisting political interference and the diversion of oil revenues to the military he made enemies once again and lost the all-important support of the Shah. He resigned in February 1959 and was not to see the Shah again for 18 years.

In November 1961 Ebtehaj was arrested on trumped-up charges of ac-

ting illegally in signing a contract, while head of the Plan Organisation with a well-known American firm of consultants. He spent seven months in prison before adverse publicity in the United States and the UK caused the Shah to order his release without trial.

Before this he had, with financial help from his second wife, Azar, whom he had married in 1956, founded his own Iranian Bank. A shrewd businesswoman, she managed the bank during his imprisonment. In 1974 Ebtehaj established as a joint venture with a leading American insurance company the Iran-America International Insurance Co. Both institutions prospered.

In 1977, in what proved to be a very lucky decision, Ebtehaj sold out his interest in the bank very profitably. He was in France with his family at the time of the Shah's fall and decided to remain there rather than

face the uncertainties of Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini. In 1984, unhappy with the political situation in France, he moved with his family to London where he busied himself with writing his memoirs, helped by his step-son, Alireza Arouzi (a former Deputy Minister of Commerce) and other researchers.

They to Ebtehaj's surprise and delight, found papers at the Public Record Office demonstrating the high opinion we in the Tehran Embassy had of his integrity and key role in the modernising of Iran. Hitherto he had harboured a suspicion that the British had in some way been responsible for his imprisonment. He now wrote to tell me, "It is remarkable that on the British side the late Sir Roger Stevens, you, and a number of senior Bank of England officials went out of their way to defend me - without any knowledge on my part - thus demon-



Ebtehaj: modernising Iran

strating British fair play of which I have been a strong believer."

DENIS WRIGHT

Abol Hassan Ebtehaj, banker, economist and diplomat: born 29 November 1899; twice married (one son, one daughter, one step-son, one stepdaughter); died London 25 February 1999.

I'm scared to go on holiday

Mona's booked to go to India, but though she happily travelled the world in her twenties, she's developing a phobia about going away, worrying both before and during her holidays. She doesn't want to cancel the trip, but how can she overcome these fears?

VIRGINIA'S ADVICE

A sure sign of leaving your twenties, is starting to pack days before a holiday, making lists, and arriving at the station a good half-an-hour in advance. But why? Is it because when you're young the prospect of contracting Aids abroad with a dirty foreign hospital needle, getting kidnapped or getting food-poisoning, seem ludicrously unlikely? And anyway, who cares? Death or disablement just never seem to be on the cards. The young feel they are invulnerable.

But with more experience of the real pitfalls in life, and anxiety about your own health, your mind can go haywire. The unfamiliar can become more, not less, frightening.

Then there's leaving home. When you're a student, you probably haven't really got a home to leave. You may have a room in your parents' home, or a rented room at university, but you haven't spent years and years building a cosy little nest for yourself. Once you've got your own place, with all your own things and your own smells and your own treasures, it's much harder to leave home. You get increasingly like an old barnacle,

and when it comes to going away it's like prising a moss-covered mollusc from a cave wall. I spend half my time on holiday worrying myself sick that the house will have burnt down when I return. Or that it will be swarming with burglars. Or will be stripped bare, with nothing left but the rotting bodies of my son and my cat, stabbed through the hearts with an ornamental sword.

One way Mona can set her mind at rest about her home is to employ a home-sitter, either one from an agency, or a trustworthy person who lives in a room the size of a biscuit tin and who'd appreciate a bit more space. The cats would be fed, the plants watered, the burglars kept away by lights and activity. Mona could even ring nightly to check that everything was OK.

Another way Mona could panic less would be to cancel her planned holiday and book a package to India instead. Oh, groan, groan, how dreadfully unadventurous, horribly safe. I can hear Mona sigh, but better than a holiday ruined by anxiety. The good thing about packages is that they enable you to get to know places in safety, and then, if you want to return the following year on your own, you feel far less frightened.

And packages can be used. You needn't join the herd every day. You can do your own thing. But you do know that at the end of the day there's a comfortable hotel and sympathetic people who, were you to get thoroughly squished by an elephant on the way to the Red Fort, would care for you and see that you were sent back home safely.

No, this is not encouraging the spirit of adventure, I know. But the spirit of adventure, when sored by acute anxiety, is like experiencing the first day of school again and again. It's impossible properly to absorb new sights if your head is gripped by an iron band of panic. It's impossible to sleep. It's impossible to enjoy yourself.

By trying to be as adventurous as she was in her twenties, Mona may be like a man with thinning hair who is trying to cultivate the Melvyn Bragg look. But she should also remember that by taking a few unadventurous holidays and desensitising herself, she may be able slowly to regain her confidence about going away. Then, who knows? Tomorrow, the world?

DILEMMAS WITH VIRGINIA IRONSIDE



The trick is to keep busy. I work in Europe and the Middle East as a tour director for travel companies, and used to be petrified the day or two before my visitors arrived at the airport. I could not sleep or relax properly.

The solution for me was to keep myself so busy that I didn't have time to worry or think of the trip beforehand, then, when it arrived, it was too late to go back. Irrational fears are simply the anticipation of newness (not always welcome). But something new can be welcome, if you never go, you will never know. **CHRISTIAN BARKEI**
Durham

Pack up your troubles... I too struggle with many fears before I travel (which I do, a lot). Have I left the iron on the door unlocked (I often have to go home to check)? Worst of all, will my children somehow die while I'm away?

But don't let fears stop you from going to India (I took my whole family there recently and it was wonderful). The trick is to imagine you are firmly packing your fears into

READERS' SUGGESTIONS

a small box that goes into your suitcase - so your fears are acknowledged and with you - but safely contained.

On your day of departure, keep swigging on the Rescue Remedy and/or whisky - but for heavens sake go! **BRIGID MCCONVILLE**
Bridgwater, Somerset

Listen to your fears "To be an intrepid traveller" is perhaps a thing of your youth. When older you need meaning, too, for your travels.

Mona's symptoms should be given attention. They may be telling her that a visit to India is, at present, "not on".

Perhaps there are matters closer to home which she knows, secretly, ought to be attended to instead. India may just be an escape. Travel agents, airlines, the whole industry, encourage us to go here, there and everywhere. They are not concerned about finding "a meaning" in travel - they just want our money! **MICHAEL GUYER**

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, My baby cries all the time and is only comforted when he's sucking at the breast. I want to give him a dummy but my mother-in-law says it will make his teeth stick out and my husband, a designer, objects because he says they look so awful. I've recently read, too, that they're not healthy. But recently I bought one secretly and gave it to my baby, and he calmed down at once. Half my friends are keen on dummies, and half of them object. What should I do? Yours sincerely, Sheila

Anyone who has advice quoted will be sent a bouquet from *IrishLion*. Send letters and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, fax 0171-293 2182; e-mail dilemmas@independent.co.uk, giving a postal address for the bouquet

POETIC LICENCE

THE HEADLESS LOVER BY MARTIN NEWELL

The 'headless' lover of Margaret, Duchess of Argyll may have his identity revealed soon. Two 1963 Polaroids of the Duchess performing a sex act showed only her lover's torso. A new book about her will reveal that the man, who is still alive, is not an ex-government minister but someone more famous.

Only the gleaming faucets
And the tiles upon the walls
Return the erotic reverberation
When the headless lover calls

Did the headless lover call
In a blazer and cravat
Confusing several servants
Who could never find his hat?

But they never found his hat
Though her husband looked in vain
So sure she'd been unfaithful
With the headless man again

That headless man again
Not photographed in bed
But blatantly in the bathroom
Her husband's lawyers said

And as the lawyers read
From a lengthy list of men

I crossed myself and friends off
Since we were only 10

Yes we were only 10
And far too young for girls
Let alone the daunting Duchess
Naked except for her pearls

Naked except for her pearls?
Imagine it if you can
Disporting herself in Belgravia
With her lover, the headless man

And her lover, the headless man
What did he do in the day?
Apart from giving headless
They weren't allowed to say

No they weren't allowed to say
But it's there in some dusty file
The name of the headless lover
Of the Duchess Of Argyll.

I'm sorry, I've been given the clues

Your starter for 10 - when is it all right to dupe your audience? By John Walsh

With a thrill of horror, the nation has learnt that the guests on Radio 4's *Just a Minute* may not be as startlingly fluent as they seem. Nicholas Parsons, for 32 years the show's oleaginous chairman, has spilt the beans that his guests - including such wits as Paul Merton, Stephen Fry and Kit Hesketh-Devereaux - aren't wholly extemporising when they hold forth on "Deckchairs" or "Maiden Aunts" or "My First Suit" with-

out hesitation, deviation or repetition. Shockingly, it seems that an hour before the recording starts, they're given a list of topics to be covered in the show, and thus have plenty of time to rehearse their "ad-libbed" contributions.

Parsons points out that "pre-knowledge" of the subjects is an option that more confident guests could decline, if they wished to do so.

"We discovered, right at the beginning, that if the subject was completely unseen, the guests were umming and

erring within a few seconds," he says. Such old hands as Clement Freud don't mind having a subject sprung on them; Paul Merton, by contrast, likes to know what's coming up, so he can have one of his stratospheric riffs all ready to go. In Parsons' view, you can't beat a rehearsal for making a spontaneous monologue go with a swing.

Well, honestly. We're still reeling from the news, last year, that the droll exchanges between guests on *Have I Got News For You?* are all rehearsed for months before being uttered. We've only just dried our tears after learning that guests on the Channel 4 quiz show *Countdown* are prompted towards the right combination of letters by a studio hand whispering answers to them through an earpiece.

How many more ghastly revelations will we have to endure? Must we envisage the prospect of Jeremy Paxman circulating the BBC2 green room, muttering "Who invented hieroglyphics? Ramesses II. Don't forget. And which opera, first performed at the Viennese Staatsoper in 1846..."? (But I think we can probably discount any suggestion of answer-rigging on *University Challenge*, given the panelists' startling level of ignorance about, say, the date of the Abolition.)

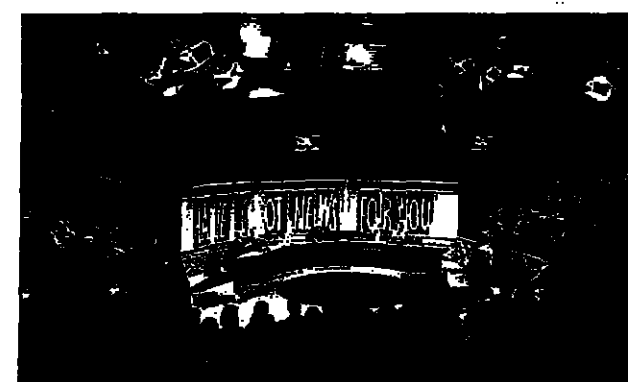
Since it seems to be the fashion to blow the whistle on rule-bending in radio shows, here goes: I was told some of the questions when I appeared on Nigel Rees's *Quote Unquote* programme a few years ago. As we sat in the hospital room, glumly flooring hock and peanuts, the show's producer appeared by my side.

"Shall we just run through one or two of them now?" she asked brightly. "Where does the expression 'Nice one, Cyril' come from?"

I said I thought it was a Hovis commercial, or possibly a football chant involving Cyril Knowles of Tottenham. "OK. Who said 'I have nothing to declare but my genius'?" Of course, it was Oscar Wilde. And which French politician memorably declared in 1916: 'Is ne passeront pas'?"

"Wait a minute," I said. "Don't tell me the answers. If I don't know them, I can always have a reasonable stab."

"Oh, all right," she said mildly. "But some people do get self-conscious about the gaps in their learning and like to have a bit of help. I mean, we don't



Have I got news for you - it's fixed Peter Macdarmid

want any awkward silences, do we?"

And you know what? She was right. *Quote Unquote* passed in a blur of amusement. Everyone sounded knowledgeable, occasionally forgetful, breezily well-read but modest with it. Every time a contestant said, "I'm guessing here, but is it by any chance...?", you knew for sure that they'd been given the answer beforehand, along with the peanuts.

Some of us had taken advantage of the producer's crib, others had politely disdained. But the point was the show, and the fact that it sounded re-

The reviews came out. 'Faulks and Walsh,' sniffed one critic, 'were as competitive as spermatozoa'

laxed, well-balanced and civilised. Whether they really recalled the provenance of the quotations hardly mattered. The audience wanted them to know the answers and be droll about them; nothing more.

Letting guests see the answers is basic showbiz management. It may involve a slight con trick, a tact white lie, but it's a deception that is no more heinous than the unseen mattresses that break the fall of the plummeting heroine at the end of *Thelma*.

Purity and probity aren't everything. They can even be counter-productive. I know this from going on a literary quiz series last summer. It was called *The Write Stuff*, written and presented by the TV critic James Walton and featuring the novelist Sebastian Faulks and myself as team captains. We

were allowed one woman writer guest each week. We were not, needless to say, shown any questions beforehand, though we were alerted in advance as to who would be the featured "Author of the Week": Dickens, Chandler, Austen, DH Lawrence...

It was lip-biting, buzzer-trembling stuff. My fingernails clawed and scissored the Royal Society of Literature's damask tablecloth. Sebastian Faulks, urbane as a Venetian doge, flicked imaginary specks of dust off his flannels and answered everything in a growl. I think you'll find it's Ossian baritone. I concentrated harder. It became something of a school-swot battle. Interrupted questions and instant answers flew around like tennis balls.

"In what year was the first novel by EM - 'Bzzz. '1905. 'Which French novelist once played in g-' Rrrring. 'Albert Camus."

Which single eight-syllable word forms the first B- 'Bzzz. 'Polyploprogenitive.' The reviews came out. "Faulks and Walsh," sniffed one critic, "were as competitive as spermatozoa. They wouldn't let their women guests have a look-in." Ve gods, I thought. In a quiz? Should we have said, "I'll have to think about that one. While I'm busy with my pipe, Hermione, perhaps you'd care to have a go?"

Would listeners have been happier with a slower, carefully stage-managed exchange of queries and responses, rather than a blizzard of raw knowledge? You bet they would. Whatever the hidden wiring, whatever sleight of hand it takes to make a broadcast show more comfortable for the listeners, I don't see any great harm in it. It makes for a smoother, funnier, more "civilised" half-hour. I just wouldn't want to take part, that's all.

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ANTHONY QUINN

PLEASANTVILLE (15)

DIRECTOR: GARY ROSS
STARRING: TOBEY MAGUIRE,
JEFF DANIELS, JOAN ALLEN,
REESE WITHERSPOON
124 MINUTES

The Fifties nowadays seem not so much another era as another planet. That's why nerdy Nineties teenager David (Tobey Maguire) takes cover from domestic discord in the refuge of *Pleasantville*, a Fifties sitcom that offers a never-never land of picket-fence contentment and calm. He obsessively rehearses its trivia, its characters and plots, much to the chagrin of his twin sister Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon), a stropmy miss whose primary concern is bagging the high-school stud. One night, during a fight over the TV remote, the rivalrous siblings are beamed right into the middle of an episode of *Pleasantville*: they suddenly find themselves squeaky-clean children of George (William H Macy) and Betty (Joan Allen) in a black-and-white idyll of perfect manners and sensible clothes.

The exquisite conceit of Gary Ross's feature debut brings to mind the artificially controlled atmosphere of *The Truman Show*. But where the latter is an escape movie, in which Truman must finally twig that he's a prisoner, *Pleasantville* satirises an enslavement not to television but to an ideal of normality. Ross has tremendous fun imagining his hermetically sealed TV town, a community of milkmen in pristine white, firemen whose only job is to rescue kittens from trees and school basketball teams that never miss a shot. Marooned within this throwback microcosm, David urges Jennifer to play along, even if it means her eating the mountainous breakfast Morn has prepared (this is pre-diet-obsessed America) and wearing a girdle ("I've got like three pounds of underwear on," she moans). His instinct is to preserve the status quo and protect these folk from the shock of the real world.

This first half-hour passes in a trance

Jeff Daniels and Joan Allen in *Pleasantville*, a technical marvel enlivened by a smart script and some great visual jokes

of hilarity as the innocence and conformity of *Pleasantville* register in Jennifer's disbelieving looks. But she soon decides to trade bobbysoxer wholesomeness for a more Nineties approach to dating, giving her wide-eyed suitor a night he'll never forget – nobody in *Pleasantville* has had sex before. As inhibitions melt away, dabs of colour randomly appear against the monochrome – a red rose, a pink tongue, a convertible, a print dress. Then, slowly,

individual people bloom into colour. Creative inspiration is uncorked: Mr Johnson (Jeff Daniels), the owner of the diner where David works, discovers a talent for bold modernist painting.

The cause of this Technicolor transformation keeps us guessing: at first one assumes it's all the sex they're catching up on, or the force of romantic love. This uncertainty gives rise to a pair of beautiful, complementary scenes. David finds his

mother in distress – she, too, has gone "coloured", and is terrified of showing her face to her husband – and so, he helps her apply monochrome make-up to hide her new-found flesh tones. The strangeness of the scene is complicated by its awful poignancy, a whole lifetime of subservience and self-mockery feels locked up in Joan Allen's face. This scene is answered later when Mr Johnson, who's been in love with David's mother for years, wipes a tear from

her face and uncovers a tiny blush of skin beneath – the skin she has tried to camouflage. It has the magical revelation of a picture restorer finding fresh pigment beneath the dullness of an old painting.

The lovely wit of this retro fantasy feels almost too good to last and, sure enough, the film gradually darkens into a parable about prejudice and difference. At first Betty's defection from home is cause for bafflement: husband George simply can't

understand why she isn't there to greet him at six o'clock with dinner on the table. Macy plays this scene superbly, doing a slow double-take in the hope that repeating his routine "Honey, I'm home!" will somehow make his wife materialise. Then other husbands find their dominion collapsing, and the mayor, Big Bob (JT Walsh), decides it's time to mobilise the forces of righteousness and restore some order. Colour is outlawed, and differences of skin pigment become a target of mob paranoia and resentment. Mr Johnson's diner is vandalised, books are thrown on bonfires; in shop windows NO COLOURED signs are hung.

Are we to infer from this that small-town Fifties America was not only quaint and provincial but a hotbed of racists and philistines too? In prompting us to examine its moral implications more closely, the fantasy of *Pleasantville* begins to fray. Contradictions and inconsistencies make hair-line cracks over its fragile veneer. We're told, for example, that all the books in the town library are blank – only when David remembers the plot does the text magically appear. But how many plots would he have to recall to provoke a book-burning? The question of why people change from monochrome to colour seems to be answered in a courtroom finale: as David explains, it's caused by intensity of feeling, including hatred. But in that case, wouldn't the mob which stoned the diner and burnt the books also have changed into colour, motivated as it was by anger?

The film also judges the issue of sex, portraying it as an exclusively good and liberating experience. I felt my more conservative hackles rise at this, ignoring as it does the complications of teenage sex and, for instance, the traumatic possibilities of divorce. Gary Ross may argue that it's merely a fantasy, yet for all the brilliance of his conception, he has a blind spot when it comes to human consequences. He never acknowledges the basic truth that innovation is a double-edged sword: the cost of anything new worth having is the loss of something old worth keeping. That "something old" is, of course, innocence, and the film's ambivalent yearning for it is both its strength and its weakness.

Let's be clear: *Pleasantville* is a technical marvel, enlivened by a smart script, great visual jokes and a handful of fantastic performances. But its thinking is confused, and faintly patronising. The film-makers start out gently mocking a place for its lack of reality. Then, when fear and prejudice sweep through town, they come over all moralistic because it has too much reality. They want intellectual sophistication to co-exist with prelapsarian innocence. They want understanding without volition. In the end, they want it both ways – isn't that just like the movies?

ALSO SHOWING

PATCH ADAMS TOM SHADYAC (12) ■ CENTRAL STATION WALTER SALLES (15) ■ SCHIZOPOLIS STEVEN SODERBERGH (18)

THERE ARE some films no one should have to sit through – not even a film critic. I'd been dreading *Patch Adams* ever since I saw the American promotional poster with its unbelievable tag-line ("Share the Laughter") and a red-nosed Robin Williams pulling one of his most ingratiating Mr Punch smiles. That *Rolling Stone* declared it the worst film of 1998 did nothing to allay my fears.

Can it be so bad? Williams plays Hunter Adams, a patient in a mental home who gets his nickname, "Patch", after he plugs a leak in another patient's coffee cup. His suicidal tendencies mysteriously cured, Patch becomes convinced that he can help people, and enrolls at medical college, where his unconventional methods soon land him in trouble with the authorities. He believes, you see, that laughter is the best medi-

cine, and so sneaks into a kids' cancer ward, puts on a red nose and soon has the whole room in a roar with his japey. The college dean is exasperated by him, his room-mate can't stand him, while the fellow student he's chasing (Monica Potter) thinks his "flighty theories of goodness" are pathetic and tiresome.

And, funny enough, I understood just how they felt. The real Hunter Adams, on whose life the film is based, may well be a fantastic doctor and a wonderful human being, but it doesn't stop you grinding your teeth as the director, Tom Shadyac, encourages Williams to indulge in a self-righteous ecstasy of emotional terrorism. "What's wrong with a doctor being emotionally involved with a patient?" asks Patch, as if the thought had never occurred to any other doctor in history.

What's wrong, and indeed insulting, about the film is its vulgarisation of medical practice: either you're a jolly, life-loving, compassionate clown or else a steely, by-the-book stiff. As it wears on, you may begin to feel your sympathy shift towards the authorities, who at least deplore the condescension of Patch's smile-and-the-world-smiles-with-you philosophy.

As for Robin Williams, I'm not sure what it's going to take for this man to return to acting, as opposed to simply crinkling his face and begging for the audience's compassion. I thought we'd seen the worst of him in *What Dreams May Come*, but his performance here is even more excruciating because he flips so glibly between lachrymosity and laughter: quoting Walt Whitman one minute and staging an elaborate hospital prank the next. Shadyac keeps



'Central Station': unflinching truthfulness

cutting away to show patients and staff creaking up in mirth, driving home the point that this here is one *funny* guy. (What we never see him do, of course, is practise medicine – free spirits like Patch don't have to.) The prognosis isn't good: if Williams continues in

this vein of neediness he may as well just turn up on his next movie with a placard saying "Lend me your tears". He should try getting over himself.

Walter Salles's *Central Station* arrives here with two Oscar nominations in tow, one for Best Foreign Language

Film and one for the remarkable Fernanda Montenegro as Best Actress. She plays Dora, a retired schoolteacher who scrapes a living in Rio de Janeiro's central station writing letters for illiterate passers-by. Back home in her dingy apartment, she cackles over these desperate messages with her friend, ripping them up or tossing them into a drawer – she's privately appointed herself editor as well as amanuensis. One of the letters her friend urges her to keep was dictated by a woman to her absent husband; when the woman dies in a road accident, her nine-year-old boy Josué (Vinícius de Oliveira) is left behind to haunt the desolate and often violent precincts of the station.

Dora, who's been stewing in cheap booze and cynicism for years, surprises herself by taking the boy under her wing, and

bickering all the while, the pair take a bus in search of the father Josué has never seen. So begins an odd-couple road movie set against the cafés, truckstops and desert spaces of Brazil's north east. At times the journey looks utterly doomed, with Dora losing her money and then her patience with the boy. Yet somehow they struggle on, and an exasperated affection is slowly born between them.

While that will scarcely win marks for originality, the film none the less takes flight on two contrasting performances. Salles discovered the young Oliveira hustling as a shoeshine boy at Rio airport, and his combination of urchin innocence and cheekiness is very endearing. Montenegro, with her lined face and lank hair, suggests years of loneliness behind Dora's watchful gaze. Although *Central Station* is apparently

concerned with finding a lost parent, it's really about an embittered old woman belatedly finding her humanity, and Montenegro inhabits the role with an unflinching truthfulness. An Oscar is the least she deserves.

Of *Schizopolis* I could make neither head nor tail, which may have been its maker's intention. "All attempts at synthesising the film have ended in failure and hospitalisation," says the director, Steven Soderbergh, who himself stars as a middle-management executive whose own double is curkolding him. The dialogue slips, for no discernible reason, in and out of Spanish, while a fog of absurdist comedy settles over all. The film has been on the shelf since 1996, and you can see why. AQ

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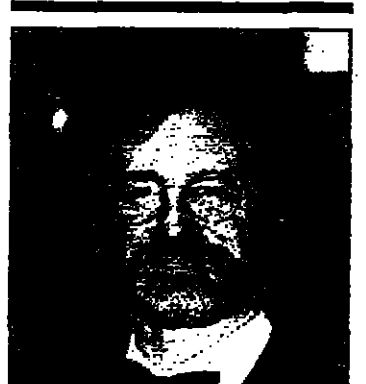
Philip K Dick's weird sci-fi inspired both 'Blade Runner' and 'Total Recall'. Now Steven Spielberg has caught the bug. By Roger Clarke

Steven Spielberg has chosen a Philip K Dick sci-fi story for his new project with Tom Cruise, due to start filming this summer. *Minority Report* tells the story of a cop (Cruise) in the "Pre-Crime Division" who is fingered for a murder he is yet to commit, and has 24 hours to solve his own case.

Hot stuff, you'd think. Proof of the esteem in which the writer is held. Yet, as if to confirm Dick's ambiguous literary status, you'll find the story out of print in this country. Not even confirmed "Dickheads" have heard of it. "Isn't that the same plot as *A Scanner Darkly*?" one said to me on the Internet, recalling the story but brilliant story of a cop whose addition to the drug "Substance D" splits his brain in half and leads him to mark on himself. If Dick wasn't repeating the plot, it sometimes seems, he was in danger of losing it completely.

Philip K Dick was an amphetamine-addicted schizophrenic who wrote about complex identity issues, psychosis, empathy and God - nominally under the banner of science fiction. Born in 1928, Chicago, he wrote 36 novels and five short story collections before his death aged 53. He was married five times and had three children. In fact, everything Philip K Dick did, was done to excess, something to do, it is routinely claimed, with his surviving an identical twin who died shortly after their birth. Pop psychologists tend to say the same thing about Elvis.

Weldon regards him highly enough to have written a foreword to a recent edition of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (in which she describes him as the "William Blake of Northern California"). She's thinks Dick makes more sense today than he did in his own time. "His fans are not the brightest, but now he has an intellectual following. His was a drug-induced, genuinely prophetic vision." Nor is she surprised that Dick's stories appeal to film-makers, "because they're stories about ideas and are therefore not fleshed out". In other words, they give directors free rein in their realisations. But they always go further. All the three



There's every sign that Spielberg will strip out the story's most interesting elements

Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, the Ford character suddenly finds himself arrested by fellow cops who do not recognise him, have never heard of him or his commanding officers, and who take him to the city police station which is in a different place from where it should be. It is a classic Dick breakdown in reality, where every mooring is loose and every certainty is yawningly absent.

In the lumbering 1990 Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *Total Recall* (based on the story "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale"), Arnie's identity is erased so he can infiltrate some insurgents on Mars without detection. Though director Paul Verhoeven does allow one moment of doubt as to whether Arnie's character is simply being fed the whole adventure by a machine plugged into his head (a sweaty doctor arrives claiming that Arnie is trapped in a computer-generated fantasy world and is suffering a "schizoid embolism"), Arnie definitely gets to Mars. Only in the Dick original is it clear that the story is a delusion: Arnie's character never gets out of the building on Earth.

The 1995 *Screamers* (based on the story "Second Variety") was a low point, even though in many ways the film improves on the plot of this very early, very slight Dick story. In the original story, the action takes place not on some distant mining colony on another planet waging a mechanised, meaningless war with other miners, but on Earth itself. In Dick's version, the war is a straight battle between Soviet forces and the United States. It bears all the hallmarks of the Cold War era in which it was conceived. As in *Blade Runner*, the main male character falls for an android girl (similarly - and saying much about Dick's spooked attitude to women and emotional closeness - in *Total Recall*, Arnie's wife is merely a woman imitating being his wife). Then again, the book does contain one of the best Dickian conceits: that of crying robotic children clutching teddy bears in order to elicit sympathy from a group of GIs before getting close enough to blow them up (it's the best moment in the film, too). Such is the warped world of Mr Dick.



Arnold Schwarzenegger in 'Total Recall'; above left, Spielberg, the latest convert

Hollywood always enjoys dysfunction and has been on the Philip K Dick case for some time. Though rather looked down on in his lifetime as a mere genre writer, an adept of pulp fiction and a purveyor of trashy mind-bending novels, no sooner had Ridley Scott filmed *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (renamed as *Blade Runner*) back in 1982, than his dark star began to rise. With tragic irony, however, Dick died a few weeks before the film was released.

Now, 17 years later, the plaudits are everywhere. Timothy Leary, the late LSD guru, dubbed Dick "a major 21st-century writer". *Village Voice* called him "an oracular post-modern" and *Rolling Stone* settled for "the most brilliant sci-fi mind on 'xy planet'". He is generally feted as the frazzled godfather of Cyberpunk, the shambolic precursor to William Gibson. And the youngsters love him. Darren Aronofsky, the precocious director of *Pi*, grew up devouring the whole Dickian oeuvre. Aronofsky has spent much of his newfound clout (and money) buying up the rights to a lot of the Dick back catalogue. "I'd love to do one of his stories soon," he told me recently. What's so special about Dick? Fey

best known Dick adaptations - *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall* and *Screamers* - actually bear little resemblance to the original stories.

Fans of the movie *Blade Runner* who have sought out the book are startled to find a strangely rambling novel with only a couple of scenes related to the film. In the novel, the Harrison Ford character is far more obsessed with owning a real (rather than android) animal in the post-nuclear earth landscape, or in needily plugging his mind into a "mood machine", than tracking down the errant androids played by creepy Rutger Hauer and leggy Daryl Hannah. Ridley Scott did re-jig the movie for the "Director's Cut" version - cutting out the continuous Harrison Ford fuzze-scuse monologue, adding a new score and fashioning a more ambiguous ending (Ford realises that he too might be a "replicant" or android). Only then does the film bear a little more resemblance to Dick's original vision.

Dick's almost constant ambiguity about perception and reality is always the first thing to be given the chop by Hollywood producers. In Do

Unfortunately, there's every sign that the Spielberg production will follow the usual path and strip out the most troubling, and therefore the most interesting, elements, of the story. After all, Spielberg is "Mr Empathy" and Dick is "Mr Don't Mess with Empathy". In *Blade Runner*, if you fail an "empathy test", you're clearly a fake human being, a box of wires or a synthetic organism without a soul. So is Spielberg about to go post-modern and deconstruct his own sentimentality? Unlikely. The Jon Cohen script has been drifting round Hollywood gath-

ering editorial accretions for years and Spielberg has already indicated that it needs "more work".

However a ray of hope is offered by JG Ballard. When I ring to tell him about the Spielberg plan to return to his roots and do sci-fi, but in the unlikely company of a mad cult writer, Ballard is up-beat. "I like the idea of someone having to investigate their own crime before it happens," he observes acidly. "Maybe Jack Straw should be sent a ticket." Ballard is vehement that Spiel-

berg is misunderstood (he's still mightily pleased with the Spielberg adaptation of his book *Empire of the Sins*). "Don't imagine that he's a suburban fantasist, he's not. He's interested in panic, fear and what it is to dream: is reality a conspiracy, are we who we think we are? Those are the same themes you find in Dick's writing. And anyhow, look at *The Truman Show*. That could have been a Dick story. A man realises his reality is a computer-maintained fake and that his family and friends

are actors. I think Dick's ideas about identity and alienation are now pretty mainstream in the cinema."

Fay Weldon is also in favour of the project, though for slightly different reasons. "Dick is the opposite of a sentimentalist, so he and Spielberg might complement each other. And one would much rather he was doing that than a Holocaust movie."

So maybe Dick won't be turning in his grave when the cameras start rolling and Cruise flashes a smile at the bearded director in his ubiq-

uitous baseball cap. Will Spielberg find that old intelligence he once displayed in films such as *Close Encounters*, or will he merely present an anodyne, only vaguely tricky confection? One thing for sure, Dick would relish a film being made by a Hollywood studio called Dream-works. Suddenly that cosy Spielberg corporate identity gains a whole new sinister ring.

Philip K Dick's novels are published by HarperCollins

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

寿司ガイド



Guide to Sushi

From its origins in Japan 1,000 years ago, Sushi has become a worldwide phenomenon. *The Independent on Sunday's Guide to Sushi*, published on March 14, outlines Sushi's history and culture, and explains the different varieties. Learn to prepare sushi at home with a simple step-by-step guide, and unlock the mysteries of this delicious, fresh and nutritious food with the *Guide to Sushi*.



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ANDREI UJICA, DIRECTOR OF 'OUT OF THE PRESENT', NOW ON RELEASE, ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (STANLEY KUBRICK, 1968)

SOLARIS (ANDREI TARKOVSKY, 1972)

THESE ARE the only science fiction films in the history of cinema which have a philosophical purpose, in my opinion. Each tries hard to be questioning, which is never an easy task. It is done quite differently in each film. I would say that *2001* is clearly asking about the existence of God. And the answer is yes, "it" exists. Whereas *Solaris* presents a riddle; there is no clarity to the philosophical question, and it is without an answer.

The future in *Solaris* is a planet in space that is almost a conscious entity. A cosmonaut lands on a space station, and it is on a planet that can intuit and provide anything that a human might desire. In Kubrick's film, the computer comes close to conscious thought, when the sophisticated HAL

turns on its human masters. In this way they share a similar idea about the possibility that another entity can act like a human; either by understanding human desire or coming near to human consciousness. However, although they were made around the same time, one is very much a Russian vision and the other is based on Western

understanding. The computer is an enemy in *2001*, and represents the negative potential of technological advance. But there is still optimism - the constant possibility that a human can be victorious over the super-computer. And of course it's very positive to say God exists. The atmosphere in *Solaris* is more depressive. You can feel how



responsive the film is to attitudes around the start of the Seventies in Communist Russia; here is the suspicion, the lack of answers, and little hope.

Kubrick's *2001* has the most brilliant cut in the history of cinema. It is the celebrated shot at the start of the film, when the monkey-man, who is holding a bone, is cut to the visually spectacular spaceship. It is

the most brilliant and impressive scene in film history.

My favourite part of *Solaris* is towards the end, when the shot goes down through the sky and lands on earth, and we see the cosmonaut's father waiting for his return.

These films are very important to me as a director, and *Out of the Present* intends to have an

extended dialogue with both films. This is evident in both subtle and very obvious references. For instance, I have used real footage from the MIR space station combined with the space station in *2001*. And to make sure that the reference is immediately recognised, I use the famous music from *2001*. My references to *Solaris* are more subtle, and there are many secret echoes.

These are the two most important films I have ever seen. I watch them periodically, and at least five or six times over the last 20 years. Although they are equally stunning, how I feel about them very much depends on the time and place. For instance, I saw *Solaris* last year. Because it is such an enigmatic film and set at the end of the century, it was perfect. But I am sure at the start of the next century *2001* will seem just as pertinent.

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER RODGER

ROBERT HANKS ON TV



'Amsterdam'... probably the best argument of the year against legalising pot

PAGE 18

2 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
Best Actor - NICK NOLTE • Best Supporting Actor - JAMES COBURN

"Powerful" ★★★★★
Derek Malcolm - THE GUARDIAN - UNCUT

★★★★★ "Nolte...astounding!"
A powerhouse picture - EMPIRE

★★★★★ "Masterly" - FILM REVIEW

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Out of sight, out of mind

Director Steven Soderbergh hit the major box-office league with *sex, lies and videotape*, then spent the next 10 years making low-budget flops. Why? He'd lost sight of his muse, the Swinging-Sixties director, Richard Lester. By John Wrathall

In 1989, when Steven Soderbergh went up on stage at Cannes to collect the Palme d'Or for his first film, *sex, lies and videotape*, he joked: "Well, I guess it's all downhill from here." He was 28. Made for \$1.2m, *sex, lies* went on to gross 100 times that internationally. It provided a blueprint for independent success that changed the American film industry, blazing the trail for everything from *Clerks* to *Pulp Fiction*.

Over the next decade, however, Soderbergh's career didn't so much go down the hill as right past it altogether. The next time he impinged on the consciousness of the multiplex-going public was directing George Clooney in last year's cool and snappy *Elmore Leonard* adaptation, *Out of Sight*. But in the intervening years he had made another five little-seen movies, the obscurest – and cheapest – of which, *Schizopolis*, finally reaches British screens this week, (four years after it was shot), as part of a touring package of neglected US independents.

With Hollywood at his feet after *sex, lies*, Soderbergh was free to do whatever he wanted. But instead of snapping up A-list star vehicles, he chose to make *Kafka*, *King of the Hill* and *The Underneath* – three clever, serious, perfectly formed little movies which promptly sank without trace at the box office.

Then in 1995 he decided to take a sabbatical to "cleanse the palate". Armed with \$250,000 borrowed from Universal Studios, he went home to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and emerged nine months later with something completely different – *Schizopolis*. An anarchic collage of gags and sketches, it revolves around an employee in a Scientology-like cult, played by Soderbergh himself, whose wife has an affair with his doppelgänger, a local dentist. "Strange as it may seem, there was a screenplay," Soderbergh comments, eternally deadpan, before conceding that the finished product "is a little more out of control than I might have imagined."

Though there's a hint of Dadaism about *Schizopolis* – scenes in glibberish dialogue, a central character named Schwitters, after the German Dadaist who made art out of rubbish



Soderbergh, above: 'My early short films displayed a lot of Lester's energy and I wondered where it had gone'; Julie Christie and Lester in 'Petulia' *Laing Nora*

he found in the street – the chief inspiration, Soderbergh reveals, was rather less intellectual: Richard Lester, the man behind such frenetic, swinging Sixties comedies as *A Hard Day's Night*, *The Knack* and Spike Milligan's *The Bed Sitting Room*. "One of the realisations I had when I decided to bail out for a while," Soderbergh explains, "was that Lester was one of my favourite film-makers. My early short films had displayed a lot of that kind of energy, and I wondered what had happened to it."

After churning out two *Superman* sequels in the early Eighties, Lester dropped spectacularly out of fashion,

and was last heard of shooting a Paul McCartney concert film. But Soderbergh is still keeping the flame, even writing a book about Lester for Faber & Faber, to be published in October this year.

The key film for Soderbergh is *Petulia*, a 1968 dissection of middle-class relationships in San Francisco on which Lester, in collaboration with his cinematographer Nicolas Roeg, experimented with the sort of kaleidoscopic, flashback-heavy structure Roeg later appropriated for *Performance* and *Don't Look Now*. "As far as I'm concerned, *Petulia*'s just a flat-out masterpiece, one of the best films of the Six-

ties," says Soderbergh. "I made everybody who was working on *Out of Sight* watch that. When you look at Lester's career, he made a very eclectic group of films. I think he was very restless in terms of subject matter, and that was something I responded to."

Schizopolis may not have improved Soderbergh's fortunes at the box office, but at \$250,000 there wasn't a great deal of budget to recoup in the first place. What it did achieve, however (apart from showcasing his unexpected skills as a slapstick comedian) was to loosen up his style no end – a lesson he promptly put into practice with *Out*

of *Sight* (made for around 200 times *Schizopolis*'s budget). Could he have done *Out of Sight* without experimenting on *Schizopolis* first? "I could have," he replies, "but I would have ruined it."

Soderbergh is currently putting the finishing touches to *The Limey*, a "sort of" thriller about an Englishman (played by Terence Stamp) in California. It's his eighth feature in 10 years, not bad going by anyone's standards. Along the way he has also become a successful producer, following up the low-budget hit *The Day Trippers* with *Pleasantville*, a charming Fifties satire which also, by coincidence, opens in

the UK this week, having topped the box-office charts in America.

As Soderbergh tells it, the whole thing was a happy accident: his friend, Gary Ross, Oscar-winning writer of *Big*, was making his directorial debut on *Pleasantville*, and wanted someone "to bounce ideas off. I was like a paid friend – I was there when he needed me and stayed away when he didn't."

Such self-deprecation isn't usually a hallmark of Hollywood directors, but Soderbergh seems to mean it. Even 10 years on, he still seems uncomfortable with the runaway success of *sex, lies*: when the conversation strays on to the film's role

in changing the landscape of American cinema, he back-pedals as fast as he can: "If it was a pseudo mini-watershed film, it's only because it made a lot of money. If the film had come out and made \$500,000, it wouldn't have started anything."

In fact, he seems far more interested in his failures. In 1996, to make ends meet while filming *Schizopolis*, he became a writer for hire, working on the ill-fated Ewan McGregor vehicle *Nightwatch*, which went straight to video in the UK ("That was a very unusual experience"). He also spent a year on an abortive project for Henry Selick (who made *The Nightmare Before Christmas*). With perfect timing, he draws: "I think I may not be very good at writing for hire."

For him, what's important is to keep working. "There are a couple of young film-makers I know who made first features that they wrote and who have yet to make their second, and I keep telling them it's more important to be out there practising than writing and directing everything to maintain *auteur* status. Nobody gives a damn about that." He pauses, as if he's given too much away. "I always knew that I wasn't going to write everything I directed," he continues slowly. "And I didn't want to because I wanted to be busier than that."

He certainly keeps busy. Next up after *The Limey* he's directing Julia Roberts, if all goes according to plan, in an as yet untitled account of a real-life lawsuit brought by the citizens of a small California town against the local gas and electricity company. After that is *Traffic*, the big-screen, US-transposition of the early-Nineties Channel 4 serial about the drugs trade. But that's as far ahead as he'll commit himself. "I don't have tons of stuff I'm developing," he explains, "because I know after each movie you come out of the foxhole with a different view of things."

There's one New Year's resolution he's hoping to squeeze in somewhere along the line, however – finishing the script to *Son of Schizopolis*. "Despite the lack of demand," he insists, "I'm going to make a sequel." Richard Lester, I'm sure, would approve.

Schizopolis is reviewed on page 10

3 ACADEMY AWARDS
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"AN INGENUOUS FANTASY"

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AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM TOMORROW

RUSHES
MIKE HIGGINS

WHEN, JUST days before this year's Academy Awards, the press start talking up an actor's rosy chances in next year's Oscars, you know someone's had a bad year. Step up Uma Thurman, star of *Batman & Robin* and *The Avengers*, whose PR machine moved into full swing with the news she's signed to Roland Joffe's *Vatel*. Screen scribe of the moment Tom Stoppard is penning the costume drama, which stars Gérard Depardieu as the eponymous master chef commanded to prepare a royal feast for Louis XIV. The \$36m production has yet to commence filming and will need to get a move on to hit US cinemas by the

end of this year to give Uma her chance of Oscar glory.

IT'S GOOD to talk. Just don't do it when Laurence Not Larry Fishburne is treading the boards. The *New York Post* reported that the actor was in the middle of a performance of

The Lion in Winter when someone's mobile phone started bleeping. He soldiered on for 20 seconds before bringing the play to a halt with a salty ad lib: "Will you turn off that fucking phone, please?!" Exit the guilty party while the audience treated Laurence Not Larry to a 30-second ovation.

THE TRULY "multimedia" is coming to a cinema near you. Probably not for a very long time, but let's not spoil the fun for researchers at Carnegie Mellon University in America. They claim they've invented a process which allows the audience to touch and feel objects seen on the screen. "You

can feel motion, resistance, and surface texture," they insist. And how? Why, with the old haptic interface, (a type of magnetic levitation device) the cinema-goer's favourite friend...

EXPECT SPARKS to fly in Cannes this summer when the newly announced head of the film festival's jury takes up the reins. David Cronenberg has already demonstrated he's championing at the bit. "It's going to be intoxicating and thrilling," he said. "Once I'm there, the physician in me won't be able to resist conducting a few diagnostic tests and perhaps writing a prescription or two."

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Kathleen Nott

Corporate recruitment consultants are increasingly targeting graduates. By Kate Hilpern

Hunters on the prowl

THE mere mention of "headhunting" probably conjures up images of high-flying executives being snapped up by top multinationals. Certainly not graduates and undergraduates with little experience of the working world. Little wonder, then, at Felicity Fisher's amazement when a headhunting organisation approached her while she was an undergraduate at Durham University. "I was asked whether I'd be interested in joining the general management trainee scheme with their client, WH Smith," she says. "There was an informal first interview followed by a day at an assessment centre, after which I was given an official offer. I was incredibly flattered and surprised. I'd been expecting to fill out hundreds of application forms before even being considered anywhere."

Some headhunting consultancies, such as Moloney Search, are equally interested in graduates who have already had one or two jobs and are looking for a change of direction. "We call this our 'Bright Young Things' practice, and it's enabled us to place hundreds of graduates with the highest potential in firms they had previously known little about," says Curly Moloney, head of graduate recruitment practice.

In truth, says Shauna Horgan, vice-president of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, headhunting is relatively rare at graduate level. But there is no doubt it's on the increase. "All universities are finding that the milk round is not working in the way that it did traditionally," she says. "And with almost double the number of students in higher education than a decade ago, it's hardly surprising."

"It would be impossible for us to send teams of recruiters to more than a small proportion of universities," says Jane Maloy of WH Smith. "But we don't want to miss the best graduates, so we came to the conclusion that using a headhunting firm that works on a national basis was the solution."



Felicity Fisher was flattered and surprised to be approached by headhunters Nicola Kurtz

Indeed, even those employers who haven't opted for headhunting have been forced to tighten up graduate recruitment processes. The Institute of Employment Studies (IES) reports that two-thirds of the members of the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) now favour particular institutions, while just under half have contacts with specific university departments. A spokesperson says: "Very often, it's just a desperate attempt to reduce the annual avalanche of applications to more manageable proportions."

Lloyds TSB is one such company. "We select the universities worth targeting based on past experiences," says a spokesperson.

Other employers, such as Asda, are going for more innovative methods. "Headhunting is too expensive; brochures are boring; presentations only reach a limited audience. So we've gone for videos," says Andrea Vowles. "We make available

to students and graduates a student-style docu-soap showing a day in the life of someone working in Asda on a graduate recruitment scheme. The point is not to glamorise the work, because that would attract a huge number of unsuitable candidates. Instead, we show the long

'Glamorising the work would only attract a huge number of unsuitable candidates'

hours, the pressurised environment and the nitty-gritty of everyday life, thereby putting off those who couldn't hack it. It's a wonderful system because it forces the graduates to complete the initial part of the screening process."

According to the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, another increasingly favoured method for graduate recruiters is sponsoring individual lectures. It works because the employer has some input into advertising the kind of graduates they want, while at the same time, gaining knowledge about the content of various degrees.

After all, it's not just the fast-rising number of graduates that is causing the sudden trend in the tightening up of recruitment methods, says Katrina Rostrop, associate director of RNB Graduate Recruitment. "There is a bewildering array of subjects and an increasing number of degrees combine several of them together, making it damn near impossible for employers to identify suitable people in conventional ways."

In addition, new research shows that three times as many students work part-time during term time to

underwrite the cost of their studies as a decade ago. "Final-year students therefore often haven't got the time or inclination to sit through employers' presentations or read their brochures. Many don't get round to applying for jobs until after they've graduated," says Horgan.

But there are worries. "Some companies are targeting graduates only from the older, more prestigious universities," says Richard Pearson, director of the IES. "They may, for instance, judge universities by their research rankings or they may go by a gut reaction that Oxbridge or the redbrick universities are the best. But many employers don't need the 'best' graduates because they can't offer jobs or salaries that suit them. These employers would be well advised to alter the criteria they use when selecting universities to visit and cultivate."

Chris Long, head of consumer practice at Norman Broadbent International, adds that employers are often guilty of selecting the cheapest headhunting firms which are simply not specialist enough. "To work successfully, consultants should not only be equipped with a thorough knowledge of their clients' markets, strategies and organisational style, but they should also have an in-depth understanding of both the content and context of the role they are recruiting for. All too often, this doesn't happen and there is a lack of mutual understanding between consultants and clients, with companies ending up with quite the wrong job candidates."

Other companies, however, are ahead of the game. Tesco, for example, is appealing to different types of graduates for different programmes. There is Excel - a general management training scheme aimed at those with upper-second class degrees or better - and the Select programme, which is more appropriate for graduates with lower grades. And it is paying off. Staff loyalty at Tesco is at an all-time high and, says HR director, Lesley James, it is aiming to oust Marks & Spencer as the retailer with the best reputation for treating staff.

Employees win 48-hour battle

AS PREDICTED, the current raft of employment changes will mean more costs for employers, more time off (theoretically) and better conditions for employees, and inevitably, more work for employment lawyers.

When the Working Time Directive came into effect on 1 October last year, employment lawyers themselves predicted that the Regulations would lead to litigation to settle exactly what the Regulations mean. That has happened.

The first case, heard on 3 March, was Barber & others v RJB Mining. It concerned Regulation 4 which sets a maximum working time which must not exceed 48 hours a week. The case was brought by five members of the pit supervisors union, NACODS, who had worked more than an average of 48 hours per week since 1 October 1998. The employees had refused to sign opt out agreements issued by the employer, but applied for a declaration from the court clarifying their legal position and injunctions restraining RJB from (1) requiring them to work until such time as their average working time fell within that limit, and/or (2) subjecting them to any detriment in consequence.

The judge, Mr Justice Gage, held that the employees were entitled to a declaration to clarify the position under their contracts of employment. Armed with that, the employees were then entitled to refuse to continue working until their average working time came within the specified limit. The judge did not grant either of the injunctions, and also held that he had no jurisdiction to decide whether the employer was in breach of its Regulation 4 duty.

The implications of this judgment for employers are enormous. The common

OUR LEARNED FRIEND



WILLIAM DAWSON

perception was that the Regulations would only be enforced through criminal proceedings brought against the employer by the Health and Safety Executive - this case has disproved that, and shows that employers have to put their houses in order or risk similar litigation.

Employers also have to take account of the fact that though the breach of the 48-hour limit was only temporary that was not considered material, nor was the fact the proceedings were being used as a tactical manoeuvre by the union. The principal issue was that the employees were entitled to a declaration as to their rights and as a result, to exercise their individual right not to work if they so chose.

Employers can ask their employees to work in excess of 48 hours a week in emergencies, but employees can refuse. Where they agree, they should be asked to sign individual opt out agreements.

This case shows that the Regulations give employees a powerful negotiating lever. This case may be the first under the new legislation, but it will not be the last.

William Dawson is managing partner of the employment department at City law firm Simmons & Simmons

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Due to internal promotion of the previous manager and a successful bid for European Funding, we are seeking to appoint to the following posts, based in the South East:

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER SCP 39-45

Salary: £23,958 - £27,792

We seek a highly motivated person to take the model forward, leading the staff team for the ongoing management of current projects and the development of new opportunities. The successful candidate will need:

- Knowledge and understanding of the needs of disadvantaged young people
- At least 5 years' experience in a related field
- Proven management experience
- Proven track record of multi-agency working
- Driving licence

PROJECT MANAGER SCP 35-41

Salary: £21,357 - £25,245

Leading on the management and support of both directly managed and franchised projects, the post holder will need the following:


- A qualification relevant to work with disadvantaged young people (eg social work, youth work, education, training)
- A minimum of 5 years' experience of work with young people
- Understanding of youth training
- Good communication skills and ability to work with other agencies
- Driving licence

For an information pack and application form for either of the above two posts, please send a large stamped addressed A4 envelope, with 50p in stamps, to:

Gina Short, Human Resources Officer
RPS Rainer, Rectory Lodge,
High Street, Braintree, Kent TN16 1JF

Closing date for applications is 19 March 1999

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

COST ENGINEERS AND COST FORECASTERS

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Specialist Procurement Services (SPS), an Agency of the Ministry of Defence has a number of permanent vacancies for talented Cost Engineers and Cost Forecasters as a long-term investment in the development of its business.

COST ENGINEERS

In this role you will use your cost estimating experience and in-depth engineering knowledge to the full. You'll be responsible for providing independent cost engineering advice as part of a team negotiating the price of state-of-the-art equipment with our external suppliers. We require people with experience of Marine Engineering, Software Engineering and Electronic Engineering. Opportunities exist for Higher Professional & Technology Officers (Ref: HPTO/CFN) in the Bristol and London areas.

COST FORECASTERS

As a Cost Forecaster you will assess the whole life costs of the MoD equipment and analyse the long-term implications of what you find. It's a role that demands top-class commercial awareness, a natural aptitude for analytical work and a high level of IT literacy. Previous experience of cost-forecasting, project management or WCC would be advantageous. Opportunities exist for Senior Professional & Technology Officers (Ref: HPTO/CFN) based in Bristol.

Entry Level:

SPFO - A relevant honours degree or chartered status with five years professional experience, or HNC/HND (or equivalent) in a relevant subject plus four years formal training and eight years post qualification experience. (Ref: SPFO/CF)

HPTO - A relevant honours degree or chartered status with two years training or experience, or HNC/HND (or equivalent) in a relevant subject plus four years formal training and three years post qualification experience. (Ref: HPTO/CF)

BENEFITS: There are opportunities, through performance-related pay and promotion, to achieve higher salaries. Other material benefits include:

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For an application form and further information call 0117 974 6510 (Cost Engineers) and 0117 974 6518 (Cost Forecasters) quoting the appropriate reference number.

Closing date for completed applications is 26th March 1999.

We are an equal opportunities employer and are fully committed to equal opportunities policy. The Ministry of Defence positively welcomes applications from suitably qualified individuals, irrespective of racial origin, sex or disability.

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- Human Resource Development
- Interviews in People
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Please send your CV to: Operations Director, Triangle South Limited, 2-6 Westgate Gardens, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2RU.

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01483 306210.

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Monday IT, Science, Engineering Tuesday Public Planning, Sales	Wednesday Finance, Legal, Generalist Thursday Education, Graduate	Friday Public, General
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Further, as the project has a significant tie to the United States, applicants should have experience in and connections to the US market and be educated to degree level. Salary commensurate with experience.

CVs should be forwarded to: The Personnel Manager, 36 Craven Street, London WC2N 3NG.



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If you prefer a printed application form or if you need any further information, you are welcome to contact us at EMDS International, 15 rue Blanche, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium; fax: 32-2-538 62 32, e-mail: euromanagers@emds.be

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& Hamilton - BP - BT - CERN - Commerzbank - DaimlerChrysler - Decathlon - Deloitte & Touche Consulting
Group - Deutsche Bank - Deutsche Morgan Grenfell - Dresdner Kleinwort Benson - Du Pont de Nemours
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Europe Retail - Hewlett-Packard - HSBC - ICI - ING Group - Ingram Micro - Kimberly-Clark Europe - L'Oréal - Levi Strauss
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Automotive - Metallgesellschaft - Mitchell Madison Group - National Semiconductor - Omnitel Pronto Italia - Pechiney
Petrofina - Philip Morris European Union Region - Philips - Pilsalt Printemps Redoute - Procter & Gamble - Proton World Int.
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8/9 September, The New Connaught Rooms, London

IT Recruitment Fair

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WILL PRESENT A HALF DAY SEMINAR
IN LONDON ON
WEDNESDAY 21st APRIL 1999

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Don't miss it! This will run from 1.00 - 5.30 pm with lunch served from 1.00 - 2.00 pm.

Location: IBM Southbank, 76 Upper Ground, London SE1.

Tickets are £95 including lunch.

For further information or to book your place call Jane Stephenson on Freephone 0800 9176534

Or e-mail janejsa@indigo.ie

APPOINTMENTS DIARY

Monday
IT, Science, Engineering
Tuesday
Media, Marketing, Sales

Wednesday
Finance, Legal, Secretarial
Thursday
Education, Graduate

Sunday
Public, General



COMMITTEE AND MEMBER SERVICES

COMMITTEE SERVICES OFFICER

SALARY: UP TO £18,600 P.A. INC. PLUS OVERTIME
(PENDING PAY REVIEW)

Committee and Member Services is a high profile unit at the core of the Council's decision-making process. Having achieved 'Investors in People' accreditation as recognition of its commitment to the training and development of its staff, the unit is busy responding to the challenges of political restructuring by streamlining existing procedures with a view to introducing the new structure in the Autumn.

The Unit recently conducted and published a survey of IT in 32 London committee sections. Brent fared excellently and is seen as a market leader for best practice in utilising electronic information systems. An example of which is our website which can be viewed at <http://www.brent.gov.uk>. We therefore require people with excellent IT skills and a desire to develop our services.

In essence, we need ambitious people with commitment, innovation, and excellent communication skills to progress our cost effective and forward thinking service which has arguably the best reputation in the country for developing staff and new ideas in opening up the democratic process.

If you have a degree, or equivalent vocational experience, and think that you are up to the challenge please telephone or email us now.

For an application form please contact Olga Pearce,

Committee and Member Services Division, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane,

Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9EZ or email olga.pearce@brent.gov.uk.

Telephone 0181 857 4300.

Closing Date for Applications: Tuesday 30 March 1999

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THURSDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.5-98.5MHz FM)
6.30 Zoe Ball. 9.00 The Longest Radio Show in the World. Ever.
12.00 Jo Whalley. 2.00 Mark Radcliffe. 4.00 Dave Pearce. 6.00 Mary Anne Hobbs. 8.00 John Peel. 12.00 Andy Kershaw. 2.00 Chris Warren. 4.00 - 6.30 Longest Radio Show in the World. Ever.

RADIO 2
(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy. 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan. 9.30 Ken Bruce. 12.00 Jimmy Young. 2.00 Ed Stewart. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 David Allen. 8.00 Paul Jones. 9.00 Punt and Dennis: It's Been a Bad Week. 9.30 At the Beeb: June Whitfield. See *Pick of the Day*.
10.00 The Alan Price Set. 10.30 Richard Allison. 12.00 Lynn Parsons. 3.00 Alex Lester.

RADIO 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Artist of the Week.
11.00 Sound Stories.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Delius.
14.7 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. Paul Allen introduces a recital given last month at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester by the Petersen Quartet. Mendelssohn: String Quartet in E minor, Op 44 No 2. Shostakovich: String Quartet No 4, Op 83.
2.00 The BBC Orchestra.
4.00 Ensemble.
4.45 Music Machine. (R)
5.00 In Tune.
5.30 Performance on 3. Vienna Philharmonic/Simon Rattle. Haydn: Symphony No 70 in D. Strauss: Metamorphosen. Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique. (R)
9.25 Postscript. Five commissioned poems blending words and sound. 4: Ken Smith: The Other Shadow. A poetic report from among the threatened Hungarians of Romanian Transylvania, recording on location.
9.45 Brahms. A selection of the Waltzes, Op 39, performed by Yvonne Tait and Andreas Groethuysen (piano duet).
10.00 Music Restored. Lucie Sleeps introduces a Spanish edition featuring songs and guitar music by Fernando Sor and Dionisio

PICK OF THE DAY

DAVID POWELL'S absorbing trilogy *Assassins* (2.15pm R) closes with a reconstruction of the events leading up to the murder of Abraham Lincoln on Good Friday, 1865. Using a stream-of-consciousness style, Powell impacts the mind of failed actor John Wilkes Booth, whose finest hour upon the stage was when he uttered the line "Sic semper tyrannis".

In the first of a new series paying tribute to "Britain's greatest entertainers", At the Beeb (9.30pm R3), June Whitfield (right) looks back on a five-decade-long career, from playing Eth in *The Glums* to rehabilitation as Mother in *Absolutely Fabulous*, with much talk of wonderful, generous fellow artists in between.

DOMINIC CAVENDISH



Also rises: John Sharian reads Herringway's acclaimed novel of the Last Generation of the 20s (9.15pm R).

investigates sporting issues.
9.00 Hoops. Fat Freddie M rounds up the latest news from basketballs. Budweiser League and previews Saturday's big final at the NEC in Birmingham.
9.30 Sportshop. Tride Rawlinson presents the sports consumer programme, including sporting investigations and news of all the latest sporting gadgets.
10.00 Late Night Live. With Nick Robinson. Incl 1030 Sport. 1100 News. 1115 The Financial World Tonight.
1.00 Up All Night.
5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM

(100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. 8.00 Henry Kelly. 12.00 Requests. 2.00 Concerto. 3.00 Jamie Cullum. 6.30 Newgrove. 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. 8.00 Evening Concert. Nicholas Tressler introduces a programme of works performed by the Hanover Band, conductor Roy Goodman. Mendelssohn: String Symphony No 7 in D minor. Schubert: Symphony No 9 in C. Michael Haydn: Horn Concerto in D. Anthony Halstead (soloist). 11.00 Alan Martin. 2.00 Concerto. 3.00 Alan Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(125.187-126.044 MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Evans. 9.30 Russ Williams. 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Harriet Scott. 6.30 London Calling with Harriet Scott/AM. 10.00 Geoff. 7.30 Pete and Geoff. 10.00 Mark Forster. 1.00 James Merritt. 4.00 - 6.30 Richard Allan.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO

(98.1kHz LW)
1.00 The World Today. 1.30 Westway. 1.45 Performance. 2.00 The World Today. 2.30 Focus on Faith. 3.00 The World Today. 3.30 Sports Roundup. 3.45 Insight. 4.00 - 7.00 The World Today (400-700).

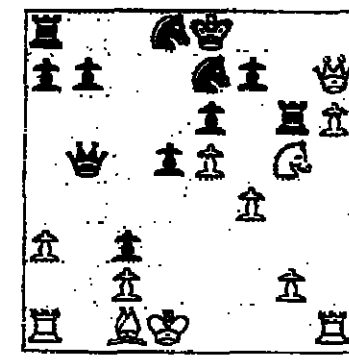
TALK RADIO

6.00 Big Boys Breakfast with David Banks & Nick Ferrari. 9.00 Scott Chisholm and Sally James. 12.00 Justice with Jacobs. 1.00 Anna Raeburn - Live and Direct. 4.00 The SportZone. 7.00 One to One with Andy Gray. 8.00 Jackie Mason. 10.00 James White. 12.00 - 6.00 Ian Collins.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESSE

JON SPEELMAN



IMMEDIATELY AFTER the 10th Goodricke Open in Calcutta, several players moved on to Dhaka in Bangladesh for a closed tournament, running from 19 February to 3 March. This 13-player event averaged 2.482 (Category 10) with six assorted foreign players, five Bangladeshis and two Indians. Like the Goodricke Open the tournament is connected to the Lawrie group, of which Duncan Lawrie, the staunch sponsor of the England team is the hub, and has a strong English connection with Julian Hodgson, winning in 1993, and Mark Hebden, in 1995.

This time, the organisers attracted an even stronger Englishman: none other than Nigel Short. Outgrading everybody else by more than 100 points, Short was naturally the overwhelming favourite but the spectacular loss below in the eighth round set him back on his heels and he overtook the thrilling leader, the Belarusian Yuri Shulman, only in the final round, to take the cup on tie-break.

White: Nigel Short

Black: Neelotpal Das

French Winner

1 e4 e5 14 h4 Qc5
2 d4 d5 15 h5 Bb5
3 Nc3 Bb4 16 Bxb3+ Qxd3
4 e5 e5 17 h6 Rg5
5 a3 Bxc3+ 18 f5 Nxf5
6 bxc3 Ne7 19 Qh5+ Kd7
7 Qg4 Qc7 20 h7 Rh6
8 Qxg7 Rg8 21 Re1 Rh2
9 Qxh7 cxd4 22 Nxe6 Nxe6
10 Kd1 dxc3 23 Qxa8 Rxe2
11 Nb3 Nbc5 24 Ra2 Ne3+
12 Ng5 Nd5 25 Bxc3 Qb1+
13 f4 Bx7 26 Bc1 Rd2 mate

POKER

DAVID SPANIER

POKER PLAYERS, hustlers, con men, gamblers - they are not all of a piece, but they do overlap. A colourful array of them is presented in an entertaining book, *The Man with the \$100,000 Breasts*. This gentleman with a predilection for taking on proposition bets had breast implants, to give him an anatomy resembling a female bosom. He had to keep it in place for a year, to win the bet. He did it, and the experience proved so unexpectedly rewarding that he found it hard to face the operation to have his breasts removed.

The writer of this story, Michael Konik, knows the gambling milieu from the inside. His collection of far-out gambling stories is both amusing and authentic. One of the episodes I liked best was his description of a bunch of American poker professionals at the King Tut International Poker Tournament in Cairo.

"The whole key to winning at poker is playing someone you're better than," explained Eric Drache, a master of the art. "You might be the ten-millionth best player in the world, but if you're playing the eleven-millionth, you'll win." Forget the Pyramids. What the Las Vegas visitors were looking for was to make a big score, by

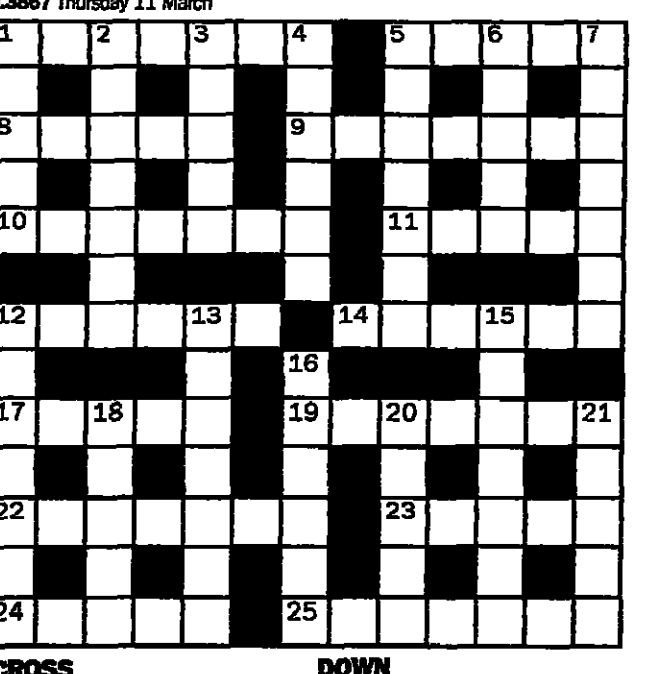
luring unwary Middle-Eastern card players into high-stakes Omaha games. In this they were only partly successful, owing to a serious lack of oil sheikhs.

The section on poker is more relevant to everyday life. It includes profiles of two world champions, Phil Hellmuth and Huck Seed, which can stand comparison with the best of poker writing. Hellmuth, at times considered by his peers "arrogant, snide and insulting", is termed a Mozart of cards. Huck Seed, posing as a country boy, is "sort of antisocial", a reluctant superstar. I wish Konik had had a chance to talk to Stu Ungar before his untimely death, to give us a "read" on the most talented and disappointing of all recent champions.

Like the rest of us authors, Konik did not fare too well when it came to taking a hand himself in the World Championship. But here too his comments are revealing. In the end he wisely realises that however cruelly the gods of chance may buffet him at the table, in the game of life he has the advantage.

The Man with the \$100,000 Breasts (Huntington Press, 365t South Procyon Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89103, \$24.95)

CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Part of baggage (7)
5 Evident (5)
8 Rub out (5)
9 Big house (7)
10 Achievement of goal (7)
11 Means of communication (1-4)
12 On the far side of (6)
14 Thoroughfare (6)
17 Player (5)
19 Part of church (7)
22 Back pain (7)
23 Italian city (5)
24 Additional (5)
25 Situated (7)

DOWN
1 Board game (5)
2 Lawlessness (7)
3 Subject (5)
4 Negligent (6)
5 Notion (7)
6 Feather (5)
7 Curl of hair (7)
12 Alphabet of raised dots (7)
13 Bluff statement (6)
15 Passage from book etc (7)
16 Place of education (6)
18 Allure (5)
20 Upper room (5)
21 Ruled (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Akur, 4 Rubble (Aberdeen), 9 Envisie, 10 Grief, 11 Upl, 12 Sailing, 13 Fit, 14 Moss, 16 Left, 18 Apr, 20 Corncock, 21 Tur, 24 Thirt, 25 Toured, 26 Ensign, 27 Habit, DOWN: 1 Avenue, 2 Trail, 3 Bait, 4 Bait, 5 Bait, 6 Bait, 7 Edging, 8 Beat, 13 Fandul, 15 Earing, 17 Scythe, 18 Aloof, 19 Credit, 22 Scrub, 23 Inch.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

THE HISTORY of rock stars in Hollywood is not littered with success stories - as anyone who has seen David Bowie's weak performance as Pontius Pilate in *The Last Temptation of Christ* or Bob Dylan mumbbling through his role in *Hearts of Fire* will testify. But Jon Bon Jovi (right) does not disgrace himself in *The Leading Man* (8.30pm Sky Premier), a romantic drama from John Duigan (Sirens), showing for the first time on satellite tonight.

He plays a Don Juan who seduces the wife (Anna Galiena) of a playwright (Lambert Wilson), so the writer can concentrate on his mistress (Thandie Newton).

History on Trial (7pm History Channel) is a series about pivotal cases - such as the battle between Darwinism and Creationism in the so-called "Monkey Trial" - that have made legal history. Tonight's contribution focuses on "The Infamous Dreyfus Affair".

JAMES RAMPTON



SKY PREMIER
6.00 Miss Ever Boys (1987) (57/27)
8.00 Dear God (1989) (57/22), 10.00 The Boy from Mercury (1989) (56/14), 12.00 The Directors (1990), 1.00 Parnassus Falls (1990), 2.00 Miss Ever Boys (1987) (56/25), 4.00 Dear God (1989) (56/27), 6.00 The Boy from Mercury (1989) (56/14), 8.00 Traces Takes On... (1985), 10.00 Hollywood Buzz (1990), 12.00 The Leading Man (1990) (56/27), 2.00 See Pick of the Day.
1.00 Absolute Power (1991) (56/27), 3.00 Indefinite Postcard (1990) (56/22), 5.00 The Mirror Has Two Faces (1991) (56/27), 7.00 While My Pretty One Sleeps (1991) (56/22).

SKY MOVIECLASH
7.00 Destroy All Monsters (1969) (56/41), 9.00 Race Against the Harvest (1987) (56/25), 11.00 Possessions (1987) (57/22), 1.00 Cab to Canada (1989) (56/27), 3.00 Destroy All Monsters (1969) (56/41), 5.00 Possessions (1987) (56/25), 7.00 Cab to Canada (1989) (56/27), 9.00 Wanted (1990) (56/23), 11.00 The Perfect Weapon (1991) (56/41), 12.30 Cover Me (1990) (56/25), 2.05 Terror of Mechagodzilla (1975) (56/23), 3.30 Playback (1989) (57/23), 5.05 - 7.00 Race Against the Harvest (1987) (56/22/27).

SKY CINEMA
4.00 The Stars Look Down (1989) (72/28/43), 6.00 Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) (52/28/2), 8.00 From Noon till Three (1978) (52/27/2), 10.00 Chariot People (1980) (52/28/43), 12.00 King (1983) (54/75/38), 2.00 The Mega (1984) (56/37), 4.00 Anne of Windy Poplars (1941) (52/28/27), 5.25 Close.

FILMFOUR
6.00 Locomotive (1992) (100/65/5), 7.30 Mr Morris (1989/85), 9.00 Stand by Me (1986) (57/25/8), 9.40 Cold Feet (1997/23), 10.00 Southern Comfort (1981) (56/37/32), 11.50 The Driver (1978) (53/38/38), 1.20 Un Filic (1972) (56/33/3), 3.00 - 6.00 Journey to the Center of the Earth (1959) (70/33/3).

DISCOVERY CHANNEL
4.00 Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures (1984/8), 4.30 A River Somewhere (10/43/43), 5.00 Time Travellers (1934/40), 5.30 Tara X (1956/55), 6.00 Wildlife SOS (1980/5), 6.30 Untamed Africa: Mother Courage (1978/55), 7.30 The Quest (10/50/72), 8.00 Discover Magazine (1980/57), 8.30 Science Frontiers (1981/51), 9.00 The Great Egyptians (1985/51), 11.00 Forensic Detectives (1977/70), 12.00 Invisible Places (1982/51).

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

IBC1 N IRELAND
to BBC1
10.55 The Heart of the Matter (1985), 11.55 They Think It's All Over Again (1989), 12.25 Film: A... of Innocence (1949/9), 2.00 John... News (24, 1947/73).

IBC1 SCOTLAND
to BBC1 London excepts 12.30
10.55 The Heart of the Matter (1985), 11.55 They Think It's All Over Again (1989), 12.25 Film: A... of Innocence (1949/9), 2.00 John... News (24, 1947/73).

IBC1 WALES
to BBC1 London excepts 12.30
10.55 The Heart of the Matter (1985), 11.55 They Think It's All Over Again (1989), 12.25 Film: A... of Innocence (1949/9), 2.00 John... News (24, 1947/73).

IBC1 N IRELAND
to BBC1
10.55 The Heart of the Matter (1985), 11.55 They Think It's All Over Again (1989), 12.25 Film: A... of Innocence (1949/9), 2.00 John... News (24, 1947/73).

Anglia News and Weather (10.52), 11.35 City Light (10.52), 11.50 The Ticker (10.52), 12.05 Public Moral (10.52/54), 12.35 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 1.00 Pop down the Pub (10.52/54), 1.50 Box Office America (10.52/54), 2.00 Cybernet (10.52/54), 2.50 Murder, She Wrote (10.52/54), 3.40 Potty about Pats (10.52/54), 4.05 Coach (10.52/54), 4.30 Judge Judy (10.52/54), 4.50 ITV Nightscreen (10.52/54).

CENTRAL
As Carlton excepts 12.30 Central News and Weather (10.52/54), 12.55 Home and Away (10.52/54), 1.00 Echo Point (10.52/54), 1.30 Shortland Street (10.52/54), 1.50 Central News at Six (10.52/54), 1.55 Central News (10.52/54), 1.58 Wonderful You (10.52/54), 4.05 Jobidon (10.52/54), 5.30 Aeon Eye (10.52/54).

HTV WALES
As Carlton excepts 12.30 This Morning (10.52/54), 12.55 HTV News (10.52/54), 1.00 Shortland Street (10.52/54), 1.30 Home and Away (10.52/54), 1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 2.00 HTV News Head (10.52/54), 2.30 HTV News (10.52/54), 3.00 Crazy Creatures (10.52/54), 3.30 HTV News (10.52/54), 3.50 Wales This Week (10.52/54).

Week 661, 11.25 HTV News (10.52), 11.55 We Can Work It Out (10.52/54), 12.05 Tales from the Daisies (10.52/54), 12.35 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 1.00 Pop down the Pub (10.52/54), 1.50 Box Office America (10.52/54), 2.00 Cybernet (10.52/54), 2.50 Murder, She Wrote (10.52/54), 3.40 Potty about Pats (10.52/54), 4.05 Coach (10.52/54), 4.30 Judge Judy (10.52/54), 4.50 ITV Nightscreen (10.52/54).

HTV WEST
As HTV Wales excepts 5.30 Pleasure Guide (10.52), 7.30 We Can Work It Out (10.52/54), 1.30 Aeon Eye (10.52/54), 1.55 HTV News (10.52/54), 2.00 Public Moral (10.52/54), 2.35 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 1.00 Pop down the Pub (10.52/54), 1.50 Box Office America (10.52/54), 2.00 Cybernet (10.52/54), 2.50 Murder, She Wrote (10.52/54), 3.40 Potty about Pats (10.52/54), 4.05 Coach (10.52/54), 4.30 Judge Judy (10.52/54), 4.50 ITV Nightscreen (10.52/54).

MERIDIAN
As Carlton excepts 12.30 This Morning (10.52/54), 12.55 Meridian News and Weather (10.52/54), 1.00 Shortland Street (10.52/54), 1.30 Home and Away (10.52/54), 1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 2.00 Meridian News (10.52/54), 2.30 Meridian News Head (10.52/54), 3.00 Meridian News (10.52/54), 3.30 Crazy Creatures (10.52/54), 3.50 Meridian News (10.52/54), 3.50 Wales This Week (10.52/54).

1.20 Pop down the Pub (10.52/54), 1.50 Box Office America (10.52/54), 2.00 Cybernet (10.52/54), 2.50 Murder, She Wrote (10.52/54), 3.40 Potty about Pats (10.52/54), 4.05 Coach (10.52/54), 4.30 Judge Judy (10.52/54), 4.50 ITV Nightscreen (10.52/54).

WESTCOUNTRY
As Carlton excepts 12.30 This Morning (10.52/54), 12.55 Westcountry News (10.52/54), 1.00 Pop down the Pub (10.52/54), 1.50 Box Office America (10.52/54), 2.00 Cybernet (10.52/54), 2.50 Murder, She Wrote (10.52/54), 3.40 Potty about Pats (10.52/54), 4.05 Coach (10.52/54), 4.30 Judge Judy (10.52/54), 4.50 ITV Nightscreen (10.52/54).

YORKSHIRE
As Carlton excepts 12.30 This Morning (10.52/54), 12.55 Yorkshire News and Weather (10.52/54), 1.00 Shortland Street (10.52/54), 1.30 Home and Away (10.52/54), 1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (10.52/54), 2.00 Yorkshire News (10.52/54), 2.30 Yorkshire News Head (10.52/54), 3.00 Yorkshire News (10.52/54), 3.30 Crazy Creatures (10.52/54), 3.50 Yorkshire News (10.52/54), 3.50 Wales This Week (10.52/54).

5.30 Tonight (10.52), 6.00 Calendar (10.52), 11.25 Calendar News and Weather (10.52), 11.35 Anatomy of Disaster (10.52/54), 12.30 Jobidon (10.52/54).

TYNE TEES
As Newcastle excepts 12.30 North East News and Weather (10.52/54), 12.55 North East Tonight (10.52/54), 1.25 East News and Weather (10.52/54), 1.35 Around the House (10.52/54), 12.05 Tales from the Daisies (10.52/54).

S4C
As Channel 4 excepts 9.00 Ysgol/Schools (10.52/54), 12.00 Bewitched (10.52/54), 12.30 Seaside Story (10.52/54), 1.00 Fanned Plant (10.52/54), 1.30 Fan: The Night We Got the Bird (10.52/54), 3.00 Doors to Manual (10.52/54), 4.00 Fiddie Lake (10.52/54), 5.00 Fanned Plant: Used 5 (10.52/54), 5.30 Countdown (10.52/54), 6.00 Newyddion (10.52/54), 6.30 Heno (10.52/54), 7.00 Pabod y Cwm (10.52/54), 7.30 Newyddion (10.52/54), 8.00 Sgwyddwr (10.52/54), 8.30 Pabod y Cwm (10.52/54), 9.00 The 11 O'Clock Show (10.52/54), 11.35 King of the Hill (10.52/54), 12.05 Deposition (10.52/54), 12.35 Fling Dang (10.52/54), 1.05-2.00 Price (10.52/54).

